

COUNTRY LIFE®

MAY 13, 2015

EVERY WEEK

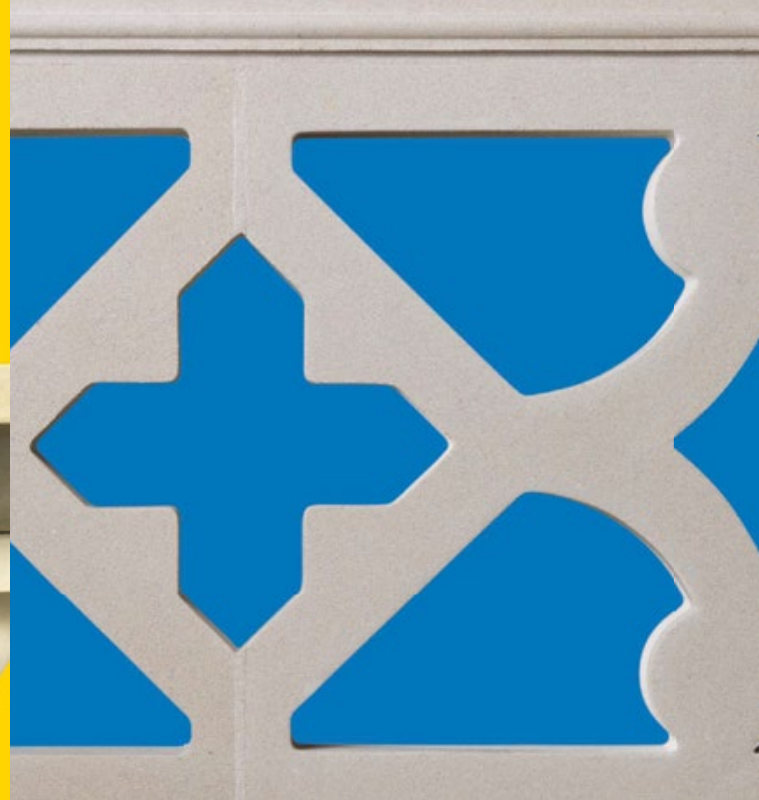
Fabulous Summer gardens

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PLUS 33 pages of the best property for sale



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West Sussex

Striking country house in prime West Sussex location

Loxwood 2 miles, Guildford 14 miles, central London 45 miles

A wonderful Grade II listed house with delightful gardens and grounds. 5 reception rooms, 6 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms. Barn, 1 bedroom flat, outbuildings, swimming pool, tennis court, gardens, orchard, ha-ha, paddocks. About 25 acres.

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[KnightFrank.co.uk/horsham](https://www.knightfrank.co.uk/horsham)
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People
Property
Places

Dorset Shaftesbury

A handsome Georgian Listed former Rectory with fine original features, including shutters and open fireplaces, standing in a plantsman's walled garden with lovely views.

- Hall • 4 reception rooms • Conservatory • Kitchen/breakfast room • 5 first floor bedrooms
- 3 bathrooms (2 en suite) • 2 second floor bedrooms • Outbuildings including wine store and log store
- Walled garden

Price on application

CL60750

Shaftesbury 01747 850 858
shaftesbury@jackson-stops.co.uk

Offices in London & across the country

OnTheMarket.com



West Sussex

Attractive country house with superb gardens in a wonderful setting

Guildford 15 miles, central London 46 miles

4 reception rooms, 5 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, cottage, 2 flats, extensive stabling and outbuildings, swimming pool, tennis court, exquisite gardens, Ha-Ha, paddocks. EPC rating G. About 9 acres.

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Best in **CLASS** NEAR BEVERLEY, EAST YORKSHIRE

Beverley: 3 miles, Hull: 10 miles, York: 29 miles

Imposing and historic country house, 5 reception rooms, 5 principal bedroom suites, staff flat, indoor swimming pool and leisure suite, games room, cinema room, coach house with estate office, garaging, 3 bedroom cottage, delightful established gardens and grounds

about 8.5 acres | EPC = E

Guide £4.9 million



Ben Pridden
Savills York
01904 617821
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Camilla Foster
Savills London Country Department
020 3489 0608
cjfoster@savills.com

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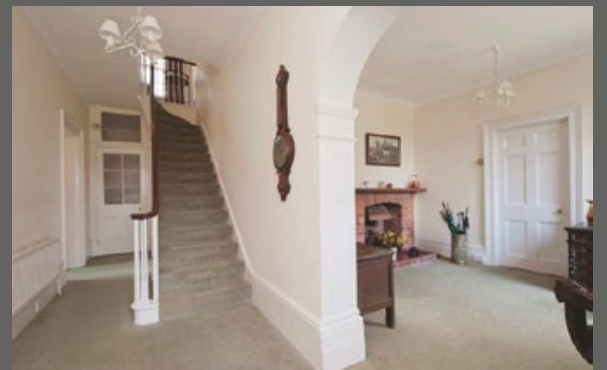


“An attractive arable farm 25 minutes
by train to the City.”



An attractive irrigated arable farm with pretty Georgian farmhouse.

Ingatestone 1 mile | Chelmsford 5 miles
Central London 25 miles



About 680 acres (275 ha)

Farmhouse | 3 Reception rooms | Kitchen/
breakfast room | 4 Bedrooms | 2 Bathrooms
3 Cottages | Outbuildings | Farm buildings
Attractive irrigated arable land | Woodland
Reservoir

Available as a whole or in 2 lots



Matthew Sudlow
Country Department
020 7629 7282



Tim Fagan
Chelmsford Office
01245 254 665



Private sales. For when discretion is the better part of value.

Not every country house on the market appears in Country Life. In fact, 50% of the properties handled by our Country House team go on sale without advertising in the press or on websites (even ours). So if you're looking to buy or sell and you don't want the world to know about it, that's fine by us. Simply call to register your details and we'll keep you firmly in the picture, strictly on the QT.



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James Mackenzie 020 7318 5190 | struttandparker.com



MAGNIFICENT FAMILY HOME IN A DESIRABLE LOCATION

ROEDEAN CRESCENT, SW15 PRICE ON APPLICATION, FREEHOLD

This magnificent designer home is located on one of the premier roads in the area and backs onto Richmond Park, offering unsurpassed panoramic views. With tasteful interiors and high specification finish throughout, and located within close proximity of many excellent schools, this is a very popular home for families.

Seven bedrooms | five bathrooms | three reception rooms | kitchen | cloak room | utility room | garage | garden | swimming pool and pool house | EPC rating D

020 8255 0088 | Donovan Kelly
dkelly@winkworth.co.uk

Winkworth



NEAR YORK

Seaton Ross

- Pocklington 6.5 miles
- York 15 miles
- Beverley 19 miles

An exceptional residential estate incorporating a substantially extended farmhouse, a converted grain mill, stabling and extensive garaging, in approximately 7.6 acres.

3 reception rooms • 6 bedrooms
4 bathrooms • Stunning 69' kitchen
Snooker room • Cinema room • Wine room
Grain Mill - Kitchen, Sitting room, Bedroom, Bathroom • EPC rating A

Asking price £1,695,000

York

01904 558200
edward.stoyle@carterjonas.co.uk

London Country Department

020 7493 0676
londoncountry@carterjonas.co.uk



WILTSHIRE Near Marlborough

- Great Bedwyn 3 miles
- Marlborough 4 miles
- Hungerford 7 miles

A charming Grade II listed property in the heart of the Savernake Estate.

2 reception rooms • 5 bedrooms
3 bathrooms • Kitchen/dining room • Cellar
Stable block with garaging • Gardens,
grounds & woodland • In all approximately
5.9 acres (2.39 hectares)

Guide price £1,850,000

Marlborough

01672 514916
rory.oneill@carterjonas.co.uk

London Country Department

020 7493 0676
londoncountry@carterjonas.co.uk

JSA Knight Frank Hungerford

01488 682726
nick.loweth@knightfrank.co.uk







Worcestershire

A unique and beautiful sporting estate in the heart of the Three Counties

Malvern 7 miles, Worcester 9 miles, Cheltenham 32 miles, London 130 miles

An historic listed Hall with extensive accommodation arranged around a central courtyard. 5 reception rooms, 7 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms. 2 bed guest annexe.

Lodge cottage with planning, storage barn, American barn with 12 stables, exercise gallop, garaging. Impressive compact family shoot. Beautiful gardens, tennis court, lakes, pastureland, woodland, views. About 138 acres.

Guide price: £3,250,000

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 **OnTheMarket.com**



Hampshire

Substantial edge of village family house with mature grounds

Monk Sherborne. Basingstoke 4 miles (London Waterloo from 44 minutes), Reading 13 miles
 5 reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, 6 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, cellar with wine store, 4 attic rooms, 2 bedroom flat with car port, large period barn with stores and garaging, swimming pool, tennis court, attractive mature gardens and grounds with pond. EPC ratings F and D. About 13.23 acres.

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Surrey

Amazing contemporary house with unique polo/equestrian facilities

Englefield Green 1 mile, Windsor 4 miles, central London 23 miles

This stunning contemporary residence comprises a large open-plan kitchen/dining/living room and 5 bedroom suites. Home cinema, games room, indoor pool and gymnasium. Within the grounds are a studio, tennis court, detached cottage, extensive stabling and stick and ball polo field. EPC rating C. About 14 acres.

Guide price: £15,000,000

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Buckinghamshire/Oxfordshire borders

On top of the Chilterns

Henley-on-Thames 8.5 miles, Oxford 19 miles, central London 45 miles

This property occupies an exceptional position set well within its own land in an extremely private location. 6 reception rooms, 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, separate 1 bedroom annexe, indoor swimming pool, extensive garaging and stores. Attractive gardens and grounds. About 25.13 acres.

Guide price: £4,500,000

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Oxfordshire

The county's most sought after address

Chipping Norton 3 miles, Oxford 17 miles, central London 75 miles

Surrounded by its own land and beautifully positioned on the edge of the peaceful village of Heythrop in prime rural Oxfordshire. 5 reception rooms, 7 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms. Immaculate gardens, 3 bedroom cottage, equestrian facilities, outbuildings, swimming pool, tennis court. Available as a whole or in 4 Lots, in all totalling 70 acres.

Guide price Lot 1: £2,750,000

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Gloucestershire

A unique and beautifully designed conversion

Stow-on-the-Wold 4 miles, Cheltenham 22 miles, Oxford 30 miles

A contemporary conversion occupying a picturesque position. 3 reception rooms, 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, landscaped terraces and garden, paddock. Planning permission for 2,000 sq ft barn. EPC rating C. About 2.58 acres. Up to 16 acres available by separate negotiation.

Guide price: £1,450,000

[KnightFrank.co.uk/STW140063](https://www.knightfrank.co.uk/STW140063)

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There comes
a time
when the
convertible
needs a space
of its own.

At Private Property Search, we don't just seek out the finest properties on (or indeed off) the market. We also seek out the particular features that make a property so desirable for you: that underground parking space. The in-and-out drive. The landmark view. And we'll go on looking until we find exactly what you're looking for. Then negotiate a price you'll like, too.

Private
Property
Search



Lot 1: The Old Manor



Lots 3 & 4: 1 & 2 Old Manor Lodge Cottages



Lot 7: Manor House Farmhouse



Lot 2: Highfield



Lot 2: Highfield

DORSINGTON, WARWICKSHIRE

An exceptional portfolio of estate properties

Stratford-upon-Avon 7 miles • Chipping Campden 9 miles • central London 110 miles

- LOT 1** Quintessential Elizabethan country house
- LOT 2** A spectacular leisure complex with planning consent for change of use to residential
- LOTS 3 & 4** Pair of charming semi-detached estate cottages
- LOTS 5 & 6** Pair of beautifully presented semi-detached village houses
- LOT 7** Handsome eighteenth century former farmhouse

- LOT 8** Range of period farm buildings for conversion to one dwelling with recently built cottage
- LOT 9** Development site for a magnificent country house
- LOT 10** Attractive detached village house
- LOT 11** Development site for three new dwellings with existing farmyard

For Sale Freehold by Private Treaty as a whole or in up to 11 lots with further land available

Stow-on-the-Wold office
t 01451 832832
robert.pritchard@smithsgore.co.uk

London office
t 020 7409 9490
london@smithsgore.co.uk



CHIPPING CAMPDEN, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

A fine country house influenced by the Cotswolds Arts & Crafts Movement with enchanting gardens, set in an elevated position with glorious views

Chipping Campden 1 mile • Moreton-in-Marsh 7 miles (mainline station to London Paddington in 90 minutes) • Stratford-upon-Avon 12 miles
Cheltenham 22 miles

Accommodation comprising: three fine reception rooms, gentleman's study, children's playroom, kitchen/breakfast room, extensive cellarage, four bedroom suites, three further bedrooms and two family bathrooms. Self-contained one bedroom annexe. Garage and courtyard parking. Exceptional formal gardens with water and heated outdoor pool. Informal gardens and grounds comprising orchard, hard tennis court, mature copse and permanent pasture meadow. Fine views over adjacent countryside towards Chipping Campden and St James' Church.

POA

🚗 8 🚗 7 🚗 4 🌿 11.23 ac

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INSIDE THIS HOME

Delightful Period Cottage; Dates Back to the 1800s; 5 Bedrooms; 3 Bathrooms; 5 Reception Rooms; Accommodation Extends to Approximately 3153 sq ft; Garage with First Floor Office; Secluded Garden of Approximately 0.46 Acres (Subject to Measured Survey); Private Parking; EPC Rating E.



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LYFORD CAY, BAHAMAS

Refined 5 BR, 5.5 bath home with expansive Golf Course views in the exclusive gated community of Lyford Cay. This timeless house comes elegantly furnished by acclaimed designer Amanda Lindroth. Vaulted ceilings, pool, 2-car garage. **\$5,650,000 US.** Nick.Damianos@SothebysRealty.com
Damianos Sotheby's International Realty
+1 242.376.1841 | SIRbahamas.com



PARADISE ISLAND, BAHAMAS

Ocean Club Estates. Elegant 5,000 sf villa overlooks the golf course. The home offers 4 BR and 4.5 baths. Owners enjoy club amenities, access to the beach, golf, tennis and the Atlantis Resort. WEB: 22451. **\$2,725,000 US.** Samira.Coleby@SothebysRealty.com
Damianos Sotheby's International Realty
+1 242.376.6248 | SIRbahamas.com



ALMA, QUÉBEC, CANADA

Exceptional property on a private island. Spacious rooms w/ open areas and plenty of light to admire lac St-Jean from the comfort of your home. The exterior offers many advantages such as private bridge access, seaplane and helicopter. MLS: 15779047. **\$1,500,000 CAD.** Martin.Dostie@sothebysrealty.ca
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+1 418.956.8687 | sothebysrealty.ca



MUSKOKA, ONTARIO, CANADA

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FOUNTAIN HILLS, AZ

One-of-a-kind single-level Contemporary, situated atop of a rare 2+ acre Ridgeline property. Surrounded by mountain, desert & city lights views from every direction. Dramatic great room, stylish dining room & signature wine room. Wrap-around deck, infinity pool, BBQ island. **\$2,795,000.** Frank.Aazami.
Russ Lyon Sotheby's International Realty
+1 480.266.0240 | CrestviewContemporary.com



PARADISE VALLEY, AZ

Privately gated Paradise Valley transitional home offers premier city lights, mountain views, extremely private side & back yard. Features a comfortable & secluded master wing to include its own balcony, viewing Camelback Mountain's Praying Monk & sweeping downtown Phoenix. **\$2,600,000.** Frank.Aazami.
Russ Lyon Sotheby's International Realty
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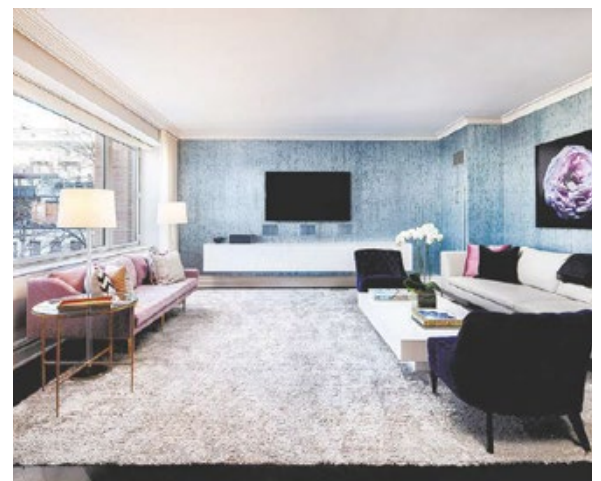
SONOMA, CA

Approximately 140 acre ranch. Approximately 11,800 sf home with 6 BR, lake, beach, softball diamond, tennis court, gardens, pool and Manager's building. 15 minutes to Sonoma Plaza. 60 minutes to San Francisco. Price upon request. Donald Van de Mark. donald.vandemark@sothebyshomes.com
Sotheby's International Realty Wine Country Brokerage
+1 707.337.2227 | SonomaRanchEstate.com



EAST HAMPTON, NY

Exquisite custom home featuring 7 en suite BR, 9 baths, double-height foyer, gambrel-style library and manicured grounds. Ed Hollander designed landscaping, heated gunite pool, pool house, porch and gazebo. **\$9,950,000.** Dana.Trotter. Dana.Trotter@sothebyshomes.com.
Sotheby's International Realty Bridgehampton Brokerage
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NEW YORK, NY

181 East 65th Street. Nearly 2,300 sf of living space and 4 BR and 3 baths, apartment 5A exudes luxury upon entering its 26' long gallery outfitted in gleaming herringbone hardwood flooring. WEB: 0010072. **\$6,750,000.** Leslie S. Modell. leslies.modell@sothebyshomes.com
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Weedon, Buckinghamshire

Standing behind the village duck pond in a quiet no through road, a substantial and most attractive period family house with a detached conservatory, garden office/annexe, garage/garden store, open cart shed, three bay garage and barn/helicopter hangar. Approximately five acres in all. **EPC: D**

Aylesbury Vale Parkway - 4 miles. Marylebone Station - 1 hour.

£1,795,000 Freehold

- 4 reception rooms
- 6 bedrooms
- 3 bathrooms
- Stunning formal gardens with tennis lawn
- Tree studded pasture including a large pond
- Garden office/annexe

Hamptons Buckingham

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KING WEST



St Mary's House, Fineshade, Northamptonshire

*Stamford 7 miles, Oundle 9 Miles, Peterborough 17 Miles. (Trains to London Kings Cross from 50 minutes)
(All distances and times are approximate)*

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GUIDE PRICE

£2,800,000

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Show home launch weekend 22nd & 23rd May

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COUNTRY LIFE

COTSWOLDS SPECIAL ISSUE

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From grand country estates to classic cottages, Country Life presents the perfect opportunity to promote your property to our affluent readership.

For further information or to advertise your property in the Cotswolds edition please speak to your estate agent or contact a member of the Country Life team:

☎ 0203 148 4199 ✉ laura.harley@timeinc.com

- Circulation: **39,132**
- Readership: **206,000** Global: **393,389**
- 89% of our readers buy COUNTRY LIFE for the property section
- Serious buyers: 1 in 3 readers are looking to buy a property within the next 12 months
- Liquid: 45% of Country Life readers will fund their purchase with cash
- Country Life carries more property pages than any other national publication-testament to the audience we deliver



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The bluebell wood

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Oil on canvas: 20 × 30 in / 50.8 × 76.2 cm

EXHIBITED:

London, The Royal Academy of Arts, *Summer Exhibition*, 1919, no. 561

Price: £65,000

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A large late Gothic carved oak kneeling angel.
Northern France circa 1500.



A William and Mary olivewood oyster veneered chest of drawers.



A small mid 18th century oak dresser base with original handles.



An 18th century comb back chair with three inch thick burr ash seat together with a fruitwood and oak turner's table of a similar date.



A small George III West Country elm winged settle.



An early 18th century Irish walnut oval stool with lion's paw feet.



For further information on the exhibition, please contact Andrew Singleton on 01728 668122
or by email; as@suffolk-house-antiques.co.uk or visit our website

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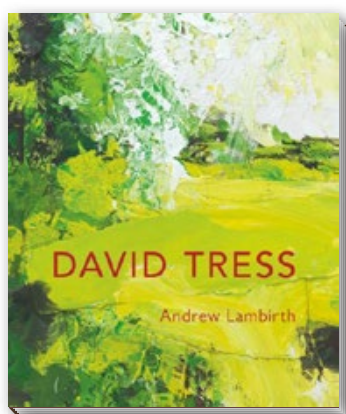
DAVID TRESS

David Tress is an artist of unusual expressive vigour, best known for his landscape paintings in mixed media on paper. He also works in acrylics and has made many fully-realised drawings in graphite and charcoal. Widely regarded as one of our most inventive Modern Romantic painters, Tress has won an enviable reputation for quality and integrity.



Green Hill (Wet Spring), 2014
mixed media on paper 66 x 82 cms 26 x 32¼ ins Pembrokeshire

Exhibition and Book Launch Wednesday 13th May – Friday 5th June 2015



245 x 290 mm, 232
pages with over 200
full colour illustrations.

£35

Andrew Lambirth's New Book – DAVID TRESS

This new monograph on the artist David Tress (born 1955) is the first account to deal with all aspects of his career in detail and to explore fully the cultural context of his thought and achievement. Tress is a landscape painter working in the Romantic tradition whose primary subject is the Welsh countryside around his home in Haverfordwest. He paints his response to the landscape he knows and loves with an expressive power rare in contemporary art. His paintings combine formal assurance with a passionate response to subject: evocation of place is balanced by human involvement, just as realistic depiction is qualified by abstract mark-making.



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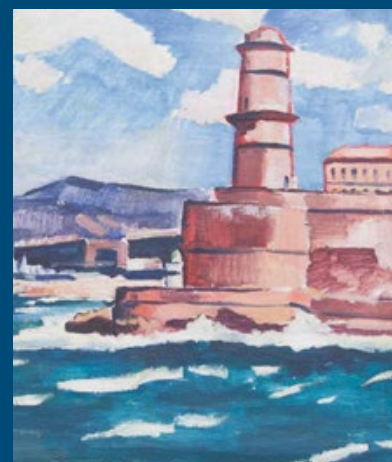
Portrait miniature in diamond /paste set frame £1,000-1,500



Art Deco diamond clip £2,500-3,000



Fine and rare Gothic Windsor chair £1,500-2,000



Václav Špála, Entrance to Marseille Port £30,000-50,000



Peal of eight bells from Prinknash Abbey



Victorian gothic mantel clock £2,000-3,000



Victorian letter box £400-500



Fine Satsuma vase, Meiji period £1,000-1,500



Manuscript music by Sir Charles Hubert Parry, Sir Herbert Brewer and other composers



Meissen ceramic drake, c. 1870 £3,000-4,000



Rare pair of Meissen vases £15,000-20,000



Dean Wolstenholme, Four Hunting Scenes £15,000-20,000

Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th May

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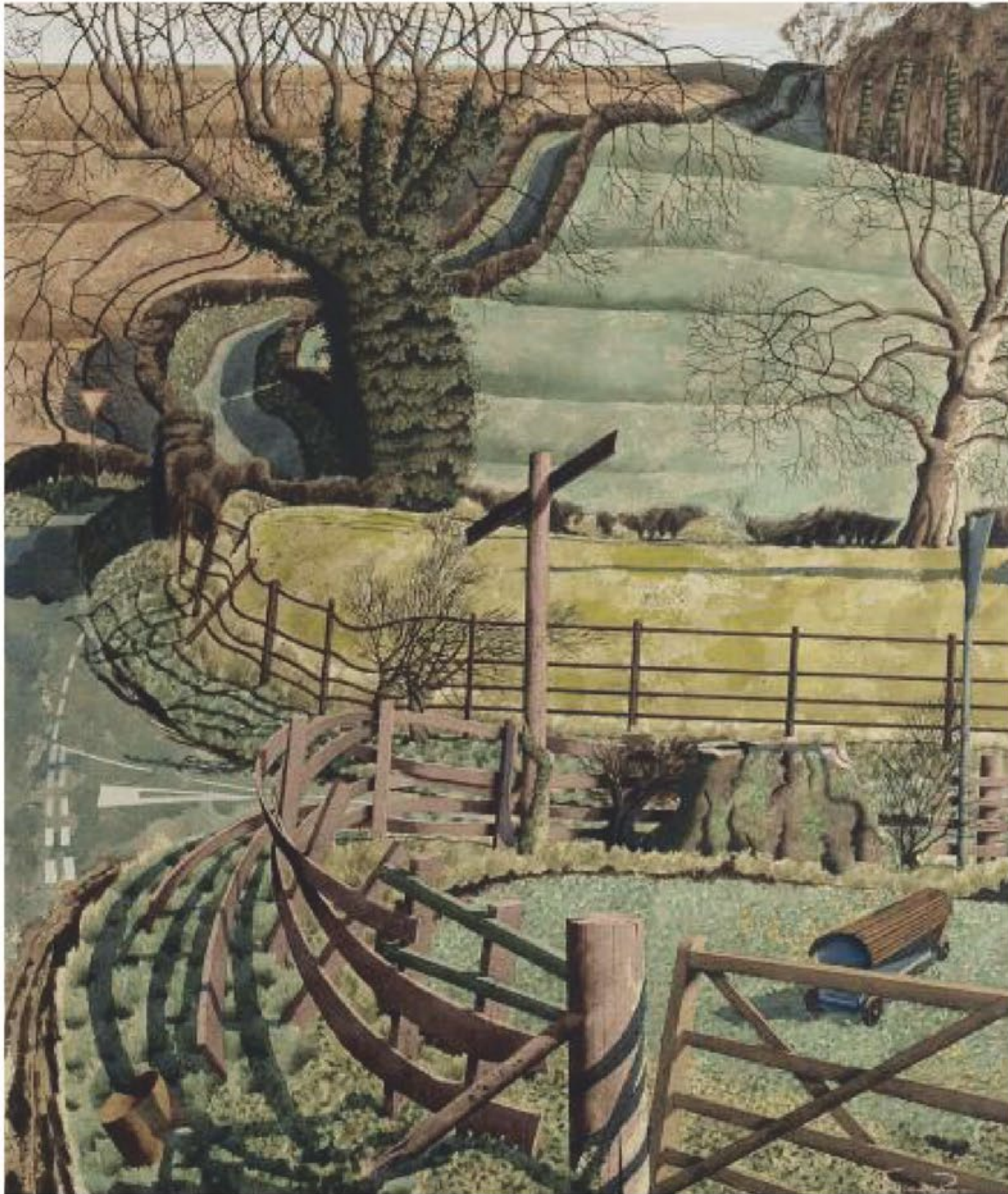


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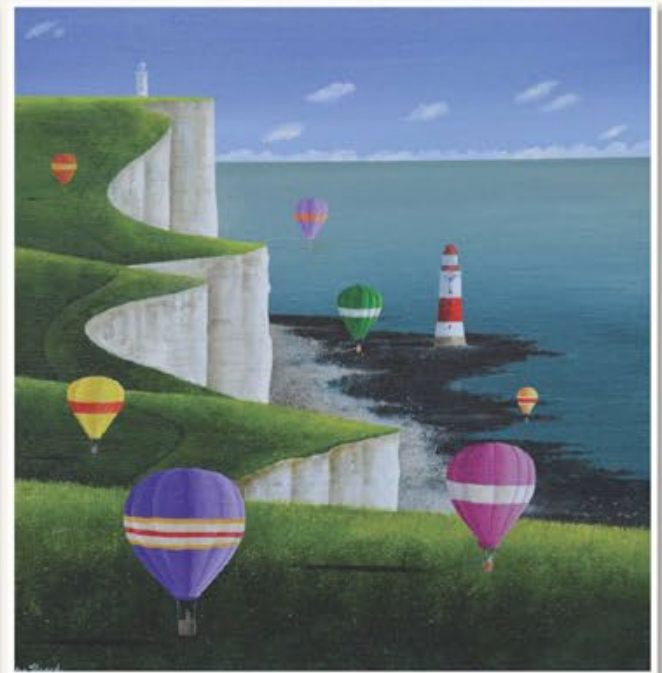
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Born in 1939, Peter Heard began painting in the 1970s. He achieved international recognition for his detailed, sophisticated early work – often wittily observed, quintessentially English portraits – exhibiting with Beryl Cook and Martin Leman at London's Portal Gallery, where he had five sell-out shows. More recently he has produced his famous collection of lighthouse paintings and depictions of English country living.

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COUNTRY LIFE®

VOL CCIX NO 20, MAY 13, 2015



Miss Felicity Furness

Felicity, only daughter of Professor and Mrs Peter Furness of The Old Vicarage, Whissendine, Rutland, is engaged to be married to Jonathan Latcham, only son of Mr and Mrs Kevin Latcham of Furzefield House, Speldhurst, Kent. They will be married at St Andrew's Church, Whissendine, this month.

Photographed at the Garden Museum, London SE1, by Anya Campbell

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Marwood Hill Gardens, Devon, photographed by Clive Nichols



Visual Arts

'The restoration is a triumph of scholarship and detective work'

The magnificent Hanover Tompion, page 96



Chelsea Flower Show

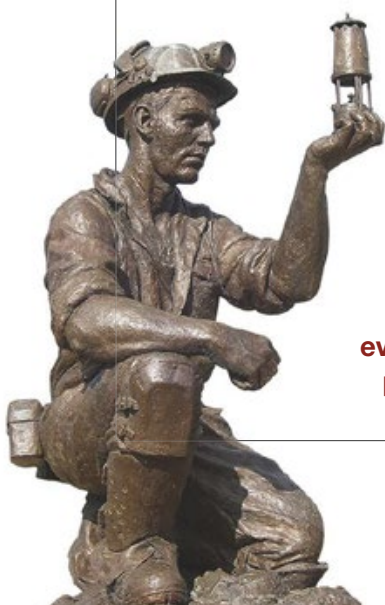
'The emerging result is an accidental Arcadia'

After 11 years, Dan Pearson returns to the show with a spectacular show garden, page 76

Portrait sculptors

'An old miner climbed on the plinth to check the lamp switch'

Detail is everything, page 44



Ben A. Pruchniel/Getty Images

The Red Arrows fly high above the assembled veterans on Horse Guards Parade, last Sunday, in celebration of the 70th anniversary of VE day

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Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Telephone 020 3148 4444 www.countrylife.co.uk

A green vision for London

THE Chelsea Flower Show has never had less in common with London's green spaces (*page 76*). The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is cutting staff and spending, unable to launch initiatives of national and global importance and unlikely to re-establish itself as Britain's greatest garden and the world's premier plant-science institution. The cause is a substantial reduction in Government funding.

The Royal Parks have suffered similarly. Valiantly, they maintain the horticultural excellence that's one of their main attractions, but for how much longer? The palpable value of their tranquility is increasingly being sacrificed on the altar of noisy, spoon-fed entertainments. Then there's the plight of London's council-controlled landscapes. Admittedly, some squares have been replanted and improved, but those are hard-won rarities. More common is the rise of dreary schemes intended to minimise maintenance or to draw income with distractions far from greenery's.

Take Battersea Park, once the canvas for the leading 20th-century garden designer Russell Page, now to sacrifice its grass, planted areas and public access to make room for a race-car circuit.

Although London, birthplace of modern horticulture, grows ever more barren, other great cities such as Paris and New York are sprouting groves, shrubberies and herbaceous borders. Funded by public and private money, these plantings are not humdrum-municipal; they're ambitious gardening at its best. Nor are they all associated with major construction developments. Many enhance existing green spaces; others conjure Eden anew in long-built-up places. Despite initial fears of vandalism, people treat this high-end horticulture with respect, taking pride and pleasure in its beauty and finding usefulness in its amenity. By comparison, some of London's most prominent and promising sites are

embarrassingly undercultivated and uncivilised—notably, the brutal South Bank.

The proposed Thames Garden Bridge is certainly no answer to the problem. This foolish folly would spoil the finest vista of St Paul's and its exposure and artificiality would not be conducive to good sustainable horticulture. But what also ought to be confirming this vanity project as a bridge too far is its price tag. Its expense to the public alone—conservatively estimated at £30 million—could alleviate Kew's troubles and make a paradise of the South Bank. The total cost of the bridge's construction (never mind its future upkeep) could, in the right hands, garden large tracts of London.

As a classicist, London's Mayor, Boris Johnson, knows the value of bread and circuses. But he should also know that some matters are of such moment that they warrant Augustus's vision and Maecenas's taste rather than mere sensation and spectacle. The greening of the capital is one such matter. It's time to appoint the landscape equivalent of Sir Christopher Wren and, with him or her, a clutch of Britain's best growers and garden designers to beautify the metropolis in ways diverse, perennial and affordable. Let Flora reign, not folly.

COUNTRY LIFE is delighted to have been shortlisted for Cover of the Year in the 2015 PPA Awards. Vote for our cover here:

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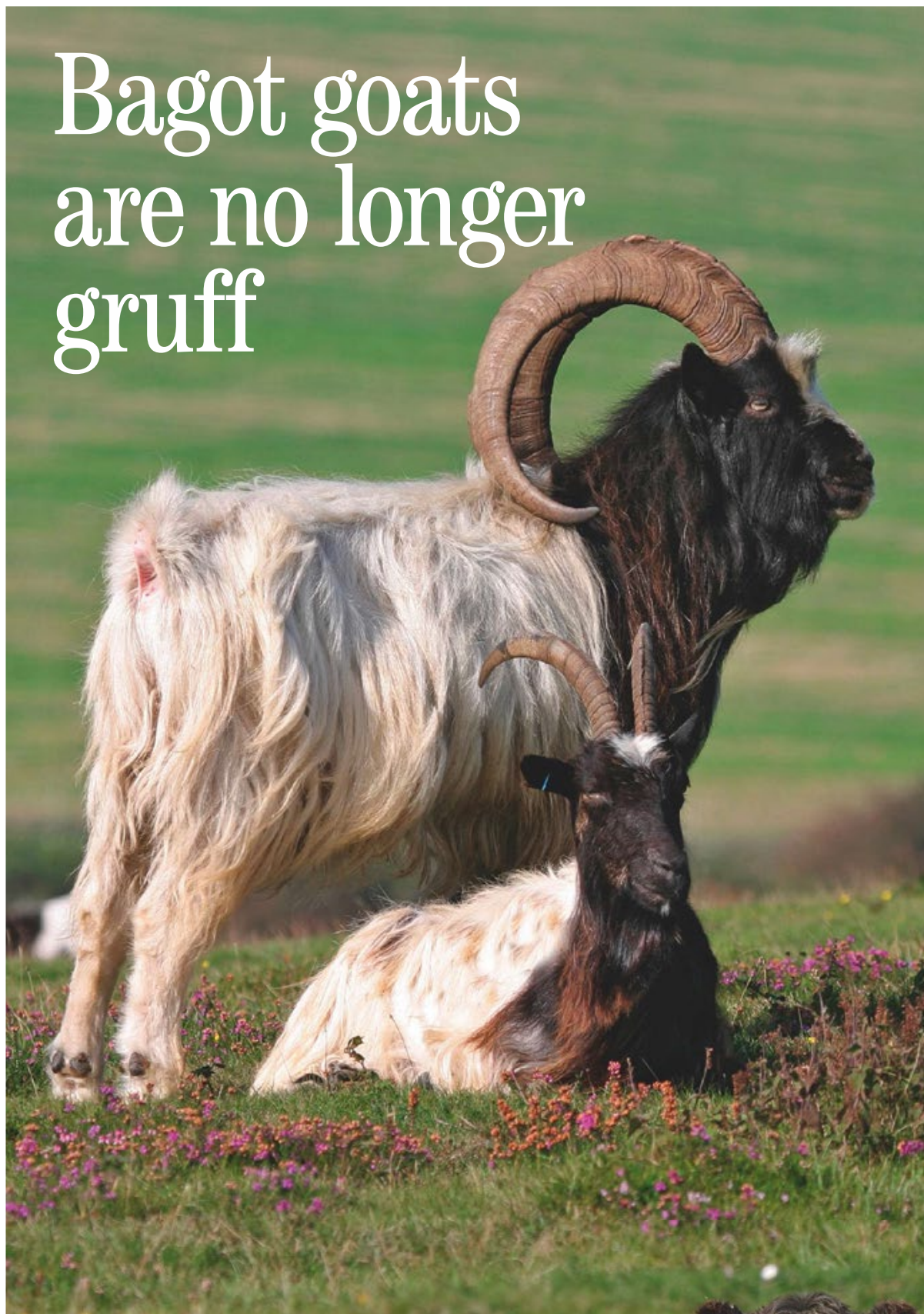
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Bagot goats are no longer gruff

Steve Taylor ARPS/Alamy; Chris Robbins/Alamy; Richard Wayman/Alamy; Royal Collection Trust/Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2015; 2015 Anderson & Low



THE Bagot goat, a magnificent black-and-white beast with a distinguished history, is in danger of becoming extinct—the Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) classifies it as ‘endangered’ (fewer than 200 breeding females)—having been passed over for more commercially viable breeds. However, the Bagot, which has its own society (www.bagotgoats.co.uk) with, until her death in 2014, Lady Nancy Bagot as its president, is also fortunate to have a dedicated champion who is energetically promoting the goat’s unfussy attitude to eating scrub.

Lucy White, a legal secretary and rare-breeds enthusiast from Norfolk, has set up Browsing Bagots (<http://browsingbagots.co.uk>), which aims to ensure the goat’s future through its potential for conservation grazing—the clearing of the scrub and coarse grass which, if unchecked, will swamp lush green grass, herbs and wild flowers. Her idea is to place ‘bachelor herds’ of entire males with landowners and conservation bodies so that bloodlines can be continued for use in the

RBST’s gene bank; already, she’s organised small herds to clear a Suffolk Wildlife Trust site and a private woodland area in the Brecon Beacons.

The Bagot has never been developed for milk or meat production—it’s mostly been a decorative parkland animal and males are usually castrated to be pets—but it’s hardy and agile and does know how to munch brambles on steep, impenetrable scrubland. ‘We love them,’ says Mrs White, who owns three adult goats and two kids. ‘They’re quite wild, like deer, so when you do build a relationship with them, it’s special.’

‘Conservation grazing is a useful weapon in the fight to save rare breeds’

Her main challenge is logistics—the cost of transport and the long distances between owners—but she reports: ‘Breeders are starting not to castrate the males now that there is this use for them, so I hope this might improve the breed’s status.’

The distinctive, long-haired, long-horned Bagot may have arrived in Britain in the 14th century, possibly coming from Portugal during the Crusades with John of Gaunt’s returning army. Another theory is that Richard II gave a herd to Sir John Bagot as reward for providing good sport in the hunting field; the breed was first recorded at his Staffordshire estate, in 1389, and the goats feature in the family’s coat of arms.

Conservation grazing is becoming a useful weapon in the fight to save rare-breed domestic animals. Exmoor ponies, which don’t mind eating gorse

and rough grass, can be found further afield, grazing the Sussex High Weald and Yorkshire’s Howardian Hills, and the National Trust’s Welsh black and belted Galloway cattle are being used to improve limestone grassland in the Cotswolds.

Scrubbing up well: bagot goats (top) and belted Galloway cattle (left) have been given a new purpose grazing on scrubland and limestone grassland





No sour grapes here: the Parva Farm Vineyard in Monmouthshire is now supplying M&S

Welsh wine toasts success

A WELSH vineyard is celebrating its wine being the first from the principality to grace the shelves at Marks & Spencer (M&S). After nearly 20 years of selling wine locally and in the farm shop, Parva Farm Vineyard in Tintern, Monmouthshire, has placed 480 bottles of its 2013 Bacchus white wine with the retailer. 'M&S approached us as it wanted to sell local wine in its Welsh supermarkets and we thought it was a brilliant opportunity,' explains Judith Dudley, who co-owns the farm with her husband, Colin.

The Dudleys also produce red, *rosé* and sparkling wines, as well as meads and honey,

from their farm overlooking the Wye Valley and lay claim to 30-year-old Bacchus vines (01291 689636; www.parvafarm.com).

They previously had to turn down the opportunity to supply Waitrose due to concerns about not having enough grapes, but recent good crops have helped them meet demand. 'Happily, 2013 and 2014 have both been excellent years,' enthuses Mrs Dudley. 'Hopefully, we will also be able to supply M&S with our 2014 vintage when it's ready.' Tintern Parva Bacchus costs £13 a bottle and is available online (www.marksandspencer.com). *Katy Birchall*

Good week for

Bored parishioners

Stand-up comic and vicar's son Bentley Browning has offered to help coach clergy to liven up their sermons

Treasure-hunters

A bar of solid silver weighing more than 100lb, thought to have been the property of infamous Scottish pirate William Kidd, has been found off the coast of Madagascar

Racing pigeons

Twenty-four racing pigeons that were stolen from their loft in Aberdeen have been returned to their owner

Bad week for

Chihuahuas

Owners of the petite pooches are being warned to be vigilant after a Chihuahua puppy was killed by seagulls while playing in a garden in Devon

Nature knowledge

A new study has found that fewer than 58% of 25 to 30 year olds know that a vixen is a female fox

Tourists

An American tourist has been ticked off by police after flying a drone too close to the walls of Windsor Castle when The Queen was in residence

China fit for a princess

Collectors of royal memorabilia will be pleased to hear that the Royal Collection Trust

has released a range of official china-ware to celebrate the birth on May 2 of Princess Charlotte of Cambridge. The handmade china is embellished with a carousel of the lion and unicorn from the Royal Arms surrounding the coronet of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and oak leaves from the Middleton family's coat of arms.

Engraved 'Celebrating our new royal baby', the collection comprises a coffee mug, pillbox, tankard and plate, all gilded with 22-carat gold. Prices start at £19.95 (www.royalcollectionshop.co.uk). *KB*



Images from The Queen's back garden

IN 2011, photographers Jonathan Anderson and Edwin Low approached Simon Brooks-Ward, director of the Royal Windsor Horse Show, about making a book on the equestrian extravaganza that started in 1944 and is held on The Queen's land in the shadow of Windsor Castle in Berkshire.

The result is *The Queen's Backyard*, which will be published next month (Dewi Lewis Publishing, £30). The 100 or so colour plates reflect what goes on 'front of house'—pigtailed girls on show ponies, The Queen presenting rosettes, floodlit military tattoos—as well as backstage: bowler-hatted stewards on bicycles, soldiers reading the paper.

The five-day show starts today, with free admission, and runs until May 17, with adult admission for the other days starting at £16 (01753 860633; www.rwhs.co.uk).



Bring in the heavy artillery: The King's Troop at Windsor



Appeal for Clandon

THE National Trust has begun an appeal for its 18th-century Palladian masterpiece Clandon Park in Surrey, which has been reduced to a shell by fire. Some paintings, furniture and silver were saved and, fortunately, the hangings for the state bed had recently been restored and were still packed up, but the Trust is anxiously waiting to learn the full scale of the loss and is asking the public not to visit at the moment. To donate, telephone 0344 800 1895

or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk.

The last disaster on a similar scale was the fire that destroyed Uppark on the South Downs in 1989; a remarkable conservation programme has restored it to glory, but it's not known yet whether a similar exercise can make Clandon rise from the ashes.

Surveying the damage: the National Trust is yet to learn the full scale of the loss at Clandon Park in Surrey



Spring is here! Hound puppies at the Belvoir hunt kennels pour out to gambol on the grass. The hunting fraternity will be wondering if repeal of the ban will be back on the agenda post-election

Gallery pushes the envelope out



THE House of Illustration, the London gallery formed in 2014 to provide a home for the art of illustration, is celebrating the 175th anniversary of the Penny Black. Until the stamp's advent, postal charges were paid by the recipient, rather than the sender. The exhibition, in collaboration with the Hereford College of Arts, features 138 decorated envelopes (*above*) from around the world. 'Pushing the Envelope' runs until May 16 at the House of Illustration, 2, Granary Square, N1 (www.houseofillustration.co.uk) before moving to the Hay Festival (May 21–31).



Woodcock (oil on paper, 9¼in by 12in, £2,950) by Rodger McPhail (b.1953), which can be seen in his solo exhibition at the Rountree Tryon Galleries, 7, Bury Street, London SW1 (until May 29, 020-7839 8083; www.rountreetryon.com). Mr McPhail is, for many people, the heir to Thorburn as far as gamebirds are concerned and the exhibition contains many exquisite examples, as well as delightful depictions of songbirds.

Dylan Thomas has his day

WELSH writers and artists have contributed to a book celebrating the poet Dylan Thomas, who died 101 years ago.

Griff Rhys Jones (*My Week*, page 52) writes on Thomas's London days, in Fitzrovia, Gillian Clarke, the National Poet of Wales, travels around his childhood haunts



Dylan and Caitlin with baby Aeronwy

in Carmarthenshire by pony and trap, and his granddaughter Hannah Ellis recalls life in Laugharne, where Thomas and his wife, Caitlin, lived in a boathouse.

A Dylan Odyssey (£20) is published by Graffeg tomorrow (May 14) on the first official International Dylan Day.

Capture the essence of summer

EASTON WALLED GARDENS, the Lincolnshire garden restored by COUNTRY LIFE contributor Ursula Cholmeley (*COUNTRY LIFE*, March 18), and rural property consultant Smiths Gore have launched a photography competition on the theme of summer gardens.

The overall winner will receive £500 and work by category winners, who will each receive a David Austin rose, and runners-up will feature in an exhibition during Snowdrop Week at the gardens in 2016. The categories are sweet peas and roses, summer life, Easton Walled Gardens, garden landscape, countryside at work and under 18. Email photographs to photos@eastonwalledgardens.co.uk by September 30.



Country Mouse *The rural majority*



SINCE the astonishing results of last week's election, Nicola Sturgeon and her gang are already demanding more for Scotland. However, a far greater 'silent' majority won the election. According to government figures, 5.3 million people live in Scotland whereas 9.3 million people live in rural areas of England. What is quite clear is that it was the rural population of Britain that, more than any other group, voted the Tories to victory and a precious majority.

These rural voters will not only watch carefully that the ruling party's manifesto promises on hunting, superfast broadband, rail fares, rural post offices, bovine TB, flood defences and local controls on planning are adhered to, but will also, in the manner of the SNP's calls for more for Scotland, expect and demand more for rural Britain. This magazine will seek to ensure that more is done on litter, affordable housing and safeguarding our farming industry. There is more research needed on bees and GM crops, more protection required for the green belt and our historic houses and more must be done to promote rural tourism, just for a start. David Cameron should remember that, although Scotland didn't vote for him, the countryside did. His majority must be used to improve rural Britain. **MH**

Town Mouse *On the buses*



IT was such a beautiful Sunday afternoon that, at St Paul's, we decided to stay on the surface, so we jumped onto a bus. It was a Routemaster, one of those practically indestructible vehicles developed in the late 1940s—a classic of British engineering. I sometimes caught one to school, judging the exact spot at which to jump off the open platform at the back to a nicety (although occasionally being ignominiously sprawled on the ground, pencils and books spraying across the pavement, when I got it wrong). I'd expected a rush of nostalgia. Instead, I was only conscious of pokiness and discomfort. We've got used to the smooth, ergonomic Boris buses that our Mayor-cum-new MP introduced as a kind of homage to the traditional double decker.

As it happens, *Making* by Thomas Heatherwick, the bus's designer, fell through our letterbox the other day. Not literally; it wouldn't have gone through and, if it had, it would have made a hole in the floor. This celebration of the Heatherwick Studio is as heavy as Ed Miliband's unfortunate pledge stone, although richer in ideas. Bring on the Garden Bridge, I say. As well as the magic of providing a garden over the Thames, it will siphon the crowds that fill Trafalgar Square along to the South Bank, in the process revitalising that ancient but dowdy thoroughfare, the Strand. **CA**

Town & Country Notebook

Quiz of the week

- 1) Which celebrated children's novel begins: 'These two very old people are the father and mother of Mr Bucket'?
- 2) What do the letters CG denote on an Ordnance Survey map?
- 3) What two words are typically used in the construction of a simile?
- 4) According to legend, Queen Boudica is said to be buried under a platform of which London train station?
- 5) The song 'Sing a song of sixpence, / A pocket full of rye, / Four and twenty blackbirds, / Baked in a pie' was used as a coded message to recruit crew-members for which 18th-century pirate?

100 years ago in COUNTRY LIFE May 15, 1915

THE way to shorten the war is to pour on to the Continent an abundance of soldiers and an abundance of munitions. In the meantime agriculture must do the best it can, and a duty lies upon the women to come forward with their help. Not that Lady Londonderry would impose this burden upon every member of her sex. Some are physically unfit to undertake it; to others it is naturally repugnant; and, again, there are many women who are fitted for farm work. The hours of labour are not too long for them, and we know on the best evidence that women farm servants can be, and are, healthy and efficient.



Words of the week

Ergophobia (Noun)

An abnormal fear of work

Hebetude (Noun)

The state of being dull or lethargic

Inspissate (Verb)

To thicken

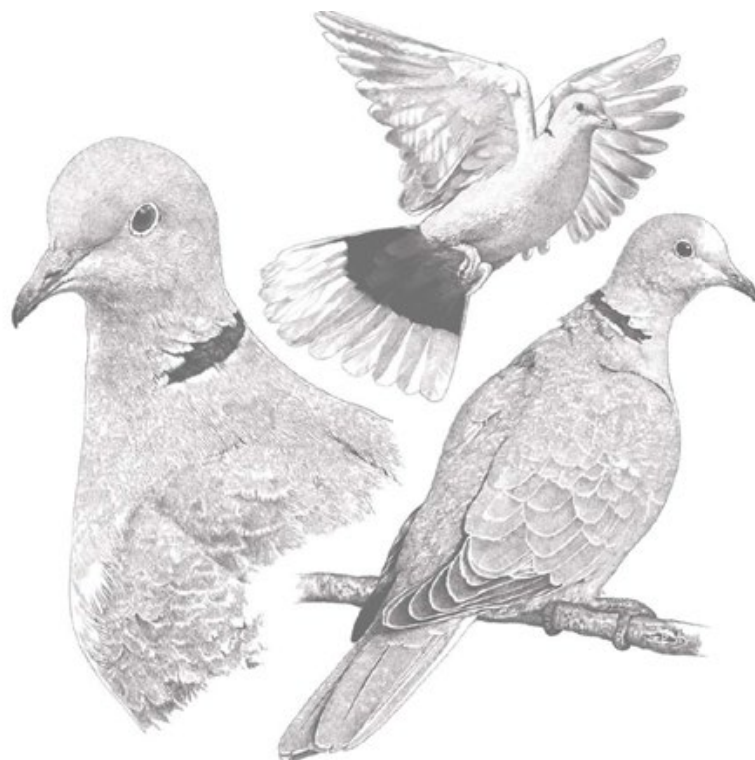
1) 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' 2) Cattle grid 3) Like and as 4) King's Cross 5) Blackbeard

The nature of things Collared dove

EVEN the best plans of the dramatist can unravel when the action ventures outdoors. Thus, after all the BBC's efforts in creating candlelit *chiaroscuro* in *Wolf Hall*, we had Henry VIII strolling outside beside billowing clouds of wisteria (unknown here before 1816). Plants often scupper a period drama's 'authenticity' and, sometimes, so do birds; hence, the soft croonings of the collared dove (a latecomer, only arriving here in the 1950s) were unexpected in 1910s- and 1920s-set *Downton Abbey*.

This charming little dove's drowsy song is unmistakeable: a languorous monotone of just three syllables, with the last being rather abrupt. 'I lurrve you... I lurrve you... I lurrve you...' he seems to chant through the warming months, although the sudden appearance of a sparrowhawk circling can bring him to wisely abrupt silence. Both sexes look similar and their plumage is Armani plain, being all-over shades of grey-beige, relieved by the eponymous black-and-white collar.

Hailing from the Levant and nearby states, collared doves spread westwards and north-



wards through the 20th century and are now commonplace everywhere in Europe, their ability to live with Man having given them a foothold in towns and cities. Pair bonds are lasting and several broods may be raised in a favourable season, from (usually) two eggs per clutch. **KBH**

Illustration by Bill Donohoe

Time to buy

Fox-terrier-fabric picture,

from £17, Pink Hannah (01454 614388; www.pinkhannah.co.uk)



Blenheim Bouquet soap,

£23 for a box of three, Penhaligon's (0800 716 108; www.penhaligons.com)



Pact coffee,

£6.95 (special offer for COUNTRY LIFE readers: £1 for the first bag, quote 'country-life15'), Pact (www.pactcoffee.com)



The Ceilidh Place, Ullapool, Ross-shire

Quietly set a block or so away from the interesting waterfront of this beautifully placed West

Highlands fishing and ferry harbour, this quirky place holds great appeal for anyone who values individuality more highly than punctilious mod cons. Serving food virtually all day from breakfast on, it's a bar, cafe, restaurant, interesting bookshop, art gallery and music place all rolled into one. The fish and shellfish are really fresh and coffee and cakes are also justly popular here; the bar is very well stocked, not just with dozens of whiskies, but also with two or three dozen wines by the glass. The bedrooms—dogs allowed—are an appealing throwback to warm-hearted country hotels of yesteryear and the upstairs residents' lounge (with honesty bar) is charming. Frequent good live music.

(01854 612103; www.theceilidhplace.com)

Alisdair Aird is co-editor of 'The Good Pub Guide 2015', out now from Ebury (£15.99)

Unmissable events

Horse trials

May 15–17 Dodson & Horrell Chatsworth International Horse Trials, Derbyshire. Three days of thrilling equestrian sport, combined with entertainment for all the family in the beautiful surroundings of Chatsworth House (www.chatsworth.org)



Exhibition

Until September 6 'Artist Rooms: Jeff Koons', Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery. The only chance to see the influential and controversial American artist's work in the UK in 2015 (01603 493625; www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk)

May 13–17 'Vanishing Lines', Art Bermondsey, First Floor, 183–185, Bermondsey Street, London SE1. Artist Fred Ingrams draws on his deep passion for the landscapes of the East Anglian Fens, where straight lines disappear into the horizon (right, 07768 890111; www.fredingrams.com)



Polo

May 16 St Regis International Cup, Cowdray Park Polo Club, West Sussex. Now in its eighth year, this match, which will see England take on The Americas, is the first international of the 2015 UK polo season. Front-row parking positions and entry tickets available in advance, entry on the day is £15 with under-12s free (01730 813257; www.cowdraypolo.co.uk)

Theatre

Until June 14 Peter Pan, Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, London NW1. The 2015 season kicks off with J. M. Barrie's original stage play. Other upcoming shows include Chekhov's *The Seagull*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (0844 826 4242; <http://openairtheatre.com>)

Garden

May 16 Broadwoodside, Gifford, East Lothian, Scotland. This ancient setting, rescued from dereliction, houses one of Scotland's finest contemporary gardens. Open from 2pm to 6pm, entry £5, children free (www.broadwoodside.co.uk)

Until May 20

The Society of Wood Engravers' 77th annual exhibition, Kevis House Gallery, Petworth, West Sussex. Showcasing a mixture of wood engravings, woodcuts and linocuts (www.kevishouse.com)

ngs gardens open for charity

Blagdon, Seaton Burn, Northumberland NE13 6DE

May 17, 1pm–4.30pm. £4, children free.

A rare opportunity to visit a jewel of the North. The Ridley family has given the garden an outstanding collection of trees, which will be at their best with fresh new foliage. A little-known contribution in the shape of a formal water garden and other architectural features comes from Sir Edwin Lutyens, whose daughter Ursula was the present Lord Ridley's grandmother (www.ngs.org.uk)



What to drink this week Loire reds

For raspberry-scented, young red wines, look to the Loire, says Harry Eyres



As the days get warmer, the desire for hearty reds gives way to a yen for something lighter, fresher and more lively. This can be perfectly satisfied by the deliciously sappy red wines of the Loire valley, mainly made from the Cabernet Franc grape. They are some of France's—and the world's—most undervalued.

Why you should be drinking them

Cabernet Franc is very seldom more than a junior partner in Bordeaux, but it comes into its own around the historic *château*-towns of Saumur, Chinon and Bourgueil in the central Loire valley, making wines that smell of raspberries and what the French call *sous-bois*, the early-summer woodland undergrowth. They're best drunk relatively young. Other Loire reds are made from Pinot Noir and Gamay.

What to drink

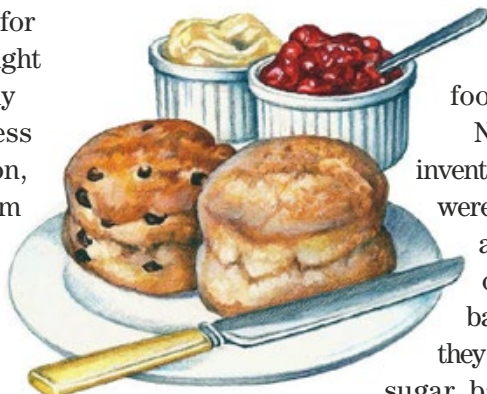
Saumur is better known for sparkling than still wine, but the best reds are classic Cabernet Franc. Château Fouquet 2013 (*below*, £12.75; www.yapp.co.uk), from Domaine Filliatreau, has an intriguing bouquet, more mint and blackcurrant leaves than blackcurrant, then there's the characteristic Cabernet Franc dustiness (a positive note for me) on the palate. Not all Loire reds are made from Cabernet Franc; Menetou Salon 2014 Domaine Jean Teiller (£13.95; www.yapp.co.uk) is a relatively rare example of Loire Pinot Noir, with truffle notes and vigorous sappiness. The best Loire red for me is Cabernet Franc-based Chinon. Chinon L'Arpenty 2013 (£13.50; www.yapp.co.uk), from an excellent vintage for Loire reds, has a vivid purplish colour, a superb, dramatic nose of raspberries and mint, velvety texture on the palate.



THE plain, simple scone is one of the more controversial members of the English bun brigade—starting with the pronunciation of its name. Whether it rhymes with 'cone' or 'gone' is a dispute that has rumbled on for years, with seemingly no right or wrong answer. Similarly questionable is how to dress it for a cream tea. In Devon, it's customary to put cream on first and the jam on top, but this is fiercely contested by the Cornish, who insist it should be done the other way around. 'We are proud of our cream in Cornwall, so why hide it under the jam?' states the Cornish cream-maker Rodda's.

Buns (and cakes) of Britain

Scone



This fierce rivalry reignited in 2011 when a Devon dairy launched a campaign to apply for Protected Designation of Origin status for the name 'Devon cream tea' on the basis that the cream should come from Devon—something that infuriated Cornish foodies. It was turned down.

No one quite knows who first invented the scone. Originally, they were made with oats, shaped into a large round, scored into four or six triangles and griddle-baked over an open fire. Today, they are round and made with flour, sugar, baking powder, butter, milk and eggs, and baked in the oven. A scone may include raisins, currants or even cheese, but, more often than not, it is plain. *Ellie Hughes*

Illustration by Fiona Osbaldstone



Letter of the week

Land to write home about



YOUR magazine champions the beauty and importance of the British countryside in all its varied and manifest forms, but how protected is it? We have ANOBs and SSSIs, but there are other areas that are paramount to our culture and heritage. I refer to countryside that has inspired great literature and artistry.

'I was brought up as a boy in one of the Home Counties in a district which I still think the loveliest in England,' wrote E. M. Forster (*above right*) about the countryside of his childhood, near Stevenage, Hertfordshire, which inspired *Howards End*. But, for years, it has been threatened with new housing.

Already, two literary landscapes have fallen to or been approved for the bulldozer—the site of *Watership Down* by

Richard Adams at Sandleford Warren, near Newbury, Berkshire, and land close to Anne Hathaway's cottage at Shottery, Stratford-upon-Avon.

As a group of literary-landscape supporters, The Friends of the Forster Country (www.forstercountry.org.uk) has identified some 30 similar areas of countryside that might be at risk: Wessex (Thomas Hardy), Hampshire (Jane Austen), Cornwall (Daphne du Maurier), South Tyneside (*above left*, Catherine Cookson), Medway (Charles Dickens), Sussex (Virginia Woolf) and Suffolk (John Constable), to name a few. In addition, many historic battlefields are also exposed, without legal protection from development.

Now that Octavia Hill's greenbelt is threatened like never before, perhaps the time has come to create a new form of protection, such as 'Historic And Literary Landscapes' (HALLS), enshrined and protected by law for future generations to enjoy. To quote Forster again, 'only connect' and we could permanently protect 'the untouched country'.

Stephen Pollock-Hill, Vice-Chairman,
The Friends of the Forster Country

The writer of the letter of the week will win a bottle of Pol Roger Brut Réserve Champagne



Contact us

(photographs welcome)

Post: Letters to the Editor, COUNTRY LIFE Editorial, Blue Fin Building, 110, Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU

(with a daytime telephone number, please)

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Not a yolking matter

ALMOST exactly 60 years ago, I was the navigating officer and senior watchkeeper of the destroyer HMS *Consort*. We were alongside in Okinawa and my captain, one Snowy Eyre, returned from a heavy lunchtime session at the US Navy O Club and asked his steward what was for lunch. 'Baked beans, sir,' was the reply. 'First lieutenant's wife ate your Scotch egg.'

I was sent for, as I was the first lieutenant, and we were informed that my wife was forthwith banned from setting foot onboard ever again. This ban was enforced for the remaining months of deployment. Snowy never yolked about these matters.

David Aldrich, Commander Royal Navy, Somerset



Pressed flowers make fine memories



I ENJOYED greatly your illustrated piece on wildflowers (*April 15*), not least because it reminded me of the pressed-flower collection I made as a young child in the mid 1950s. I still have it: more than 80 pressed wildflowers gathered, I think, with my mother in Kent and with my rather wobbly handwritten identifications. I'm not at all sure that every flower still exists, which makes me wonder if the collection can be put to any practical use. Any ideas?

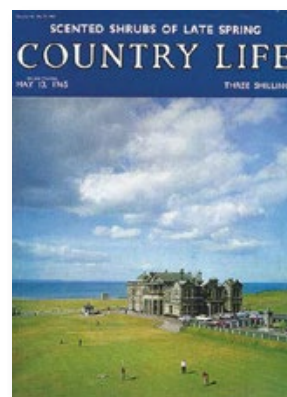
Dr Catherine M. S. Alexander, Warwickshire

Fifty years of COUNTRY LIFE: the fullness of time

ON the day of my birth, my parents, with great foresight, kept aside for me a copy of COUNTRY LIFE that was published on that very same date. Therefore, it will be with particular interest that I will read the upcoming May 13 edition to compare it with the one from 50 years to the day earlier (*right*).

With the exception of a few of the advertisements, in 1965, photographs were black and white, although the front cover shows a suitably colourful 18th green at St Andrews. The world, of course, has changed greatly since then. However, one soon realises that many of the pleasures and concerns of the countryside remain constant.

Among the articles are ones discussing the pros and cons of feeding cattle on grass or barley and suggestions for scented spring shrubs. The perennial issues of traffic and planning are also present; proposals for changes to Piccadilly Circus



particularly exercised your Leader writer, as did the parlous state of the road network, illustrated by the congestion encountered on a journey north. Housing issues are also brought up in an article about the attractions of investing in property.

An enduring pleasure of COUNTRY LIFE then, as now, of course, is a perusal of the property pages. It is here, however, that the starkest difference is likely to stand out. Even accounting for inflation, if only a Georgian vicarage in Gloucestershire, set in 2½ acres, could still be bought for £8,750 or a six-bedroom Kentish manor house for £11,000. Of note is a full-page advertisement for the sale of Highgrove House at Tetbury; the house is set among open meadows with no hint of the splendid royal garden they were later to become.

Simon Condliffe, Norfolk

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A bitter legacy

THANK you for highlighting the litter problem in Britain today. The grey gobs of chewing gum that are building up on our streets are creating a surface our grandchildren will have to wade through, if they can, in the future.

I have become increasingly saddened—and angry, too—by the litter on motorways and feel there should be a national focus on this blight—it is one that could so easily be solved. There could be many more large motorway signs put up and fast-food outlets should certainly be involved in the recovery of their packaging and in contributing to the finance of the campaign. Perhaps anyone captured on road surveillance cameras chucking rubbish out of their vehicle should have their licence revoked for a period of time?

Recently, I took some photos of verges in both the UK and France to highlight the astounding difference.

Sue Sills, Kent



Windsor's gone all topsy-turvy

I THOUGHT it might interest you to know that I have a picture virtually the same as the one belonging to Baroness Trumpington entitled *View of Windsor Castle*, shown in the *Country Life* (April 1). Mine has been confirmed as by William Havell. Interestingly, the drive and the horses are the opposite way round in my painting. If anyone is interested to see it, it is at my stud in Newmarket.

Anthony Oppenheimer, London

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Stop these modern-day invaders

WE have too many illegal immigrants. Too many who come here and displace the British born who have lived peaceably for generations, only to find that the newly arrived take their homes and even the food out of their mouths. No, I'm not making a post-election appeal for UKIP, but just pointing to the serious issue of invasive plant and animal species that are now such a concern throughout the country.

People thought that pennywort was just a pretty addition to their ponds until it began to take over, but, now, the Canal & River Trust can spend thousands of pounds a year to clear a single infestation from a waterway. Then, there's the giant hogweed. It looked really good in aristocrats' parks when, in the 19th century, they brought it in for their ornamental gardens. Now, it spreads bewilderingly quickly, producing 80,000 seeds before it dies. Eradication is all the more difficult because its sap causes really severe blistering if it gets on skin that's then exposed to sunlight.

Nor is it just plants. The native British crayfish is fighting a losing battle against its aggressive American cousin, which takes over its habitat, eats its food and spreads a disease that is fatal. Just as the grey squirrel has driven our native red to the fastnesses, so this tough red immigrant looks set to destroy our white-clawed crayfish. Just as damaging, its tunnelling habit undermines and destroys our riverbanks.

Another destructive tunneller is the mink, which threatens the water vole, the original of Ratty in *The Wind in the Willows*, with extinction. The water-vole population had reduced by 90% by the end of the 1990s and a single hungry mink can destroy a whole colony of water voles. It will also attack kingfishers and moorhens as well as what remains of the British crayfish. Once imported and farmed

for their fur, these mink escaped or were wilfully released into the wild without concern for the ecological damage their actions would wreak.

Yet there are many other guilty men. Just as entrepreneurs imported mink to make money out of the lucrative fur trade, so, only about 40 years ago, they introduced the signal crayfish to satisfy the booming Scandinavian food business. It was gardeners bent on fame and profit who brought in giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, floating pennywort and Japanese knotweed. Even today, individuals pick up plants from abroad and import them without any understanding of the risks they're taking, putting pride and profit before precaution.

Giant hogweed looked really good in aristocrats' parks, until it caused severe blistering

That word precaution may be the key to the problem. Some of these invaders come here unannounced simply because we haven't been careful enough. Immediate profit and the minimising of direct costs make us cut corners and avoid responsibility. It's not just the diseases and pests that

arrive on legally imported plants, but also even more sinister arrivals, such as the mitten crab that comes from the ballast water released from ships and the killer shrimp brought over from the Black Sea.

The result is huge costs borne by the community—local authorities, the Environment Agency and the Canal & River Trust. Taxpayers and donors are paying the cost of other people's profits. The market isn't working because the polluter doesn't pay. In this week after the election, we should be demanding that the new government insists on tough new laws to prevent new invasions. We'll have to carry the cost of what's already here, but we want no more. It's just too expensive a legacy for our children. Enough is enough.



Follow @agromenes on Twitter

How to win the musical lottery

The pianist on judging dilemmas, Russian influences and avoiding neurosis

THE distant landmark—in 2018—of his 65th birthday (for which he already has a Wigmore Hall engagement) is giving Peter Donohoe cause for reflection. Britain's greatest living pianist talks a lot about the 'butterfly effect' for, it seems, even those with dream careers ponder how a different hand might have shunted them into the cul-de-sac of the also-rans.

Thirty years ago, as now, international piano competitions were the major springboard to huge careers. In 1982, Mr Donohoe was an ante-post favourite for the most prestigious of all, the Tchaikovsky, held every four years in Moscow. That year, bizarrely, the jury decided not to award a first prize, so he and Vladimir Ovchinnikov shared the silver medal, a technicality that did nothing to inhibit their immediate superstardoms.

Nonetheless, Mr Donohoe thinks the outcome could have been different. Towards the end of this marathon contest, he idly sliced his hand on a can of Carlsberg. On doctor's orders, he wasn't to touch a key for five days, so he was bumped on to play last in the finals—he thinks this cannot but have helped keep him at the forefront of the jury's collective mind.

'There is always a huge element of lottery in competitions,' he admits. 'I am on juries myself nowadays [including the Tchaikovsky since 2011]. Are the judges truly "in gear" in week one? Can we really remember how well the first out of 104 starters played? And that's just one part of who is most ready for the profession you are about to land them with. Do you send through the entrant who plays four pieces to an equal level, the one whose Scarlatti was miraculous, but his Debussy appalling, the teenage genius or the 29-year-old who will be too old to enter next time? It's a big responsibility.'

Mr Donohoe says he wasn't one of the 'cool' kids growing up in Lancashire—popularity came later,

at the University of Leeds, where he joined a rock group—but it would be wrong to think he spent an isolated childhood shackled to the piano; indeed, he worries for the prodigies who do. He sang in Manchester Cathedral choir and found every instrument easy. An accomplished string player, he happily sat in the orchestral rank and file and was offered a permanent job as percussionist with the Hallé. One shudders to think of the loss to British virtuoso piano playing had he accepted.

‘People with ruthless ambition often end up disappointed and bitter’

He devoted himself to the piano belatedly, studying in Paris with the great composer Olivier Messiaen, among others. 'Until I was 24, I rather railed against being a soloist. Fear of disappointment made me hesitate. I couldn't visualise the lifestyle, all the travelling and spending so much time on your own,' he explains.

'I had a lot of fun in orchestras and benefited from influences many other soloists don't get. It helps you

understand how a piece "breathes" and gives an appreciation of what the person at the back is playing. I rather like the idea that I know how orchestras work and, when I conduct, what it must be like to be on the receiving end.'

Mr Donohoe's special association with Russian piano music results from a lifelong love affair with that country and his well-honed understanding of its politics and their effect on the Arts. Having already won numerous prizes, including the Leeds International in 1981, he didn't really need to enter the Tchaikovsky back in the 1980s, but did so through peer pressure and the welcome opportunity to visit the Soviet Union. 'When I was a boy, Yuri Gagarin, the first man in outer space, visited Manchester—it was twinned with Leningrad. We all waved Soviet flags as his convoy drove past our school,' he recalls.

'I was fascinated by this gigantic country and its secretive ways. It was the height of the Cold War and we thought the end of the planet was coming because of them. There was a lot of propaganda from both sides, but when I finally got to Moscow, I found they were just like us. The Slavic nature is family-orientated and very culturally aware.'

He's saddened that Britain has never been as proud of its

indigenous composers as the Russians are of theirs. The Russian tradition of piano teaching and the 'duty' to eschew hobbies and devote oneself to promoting national music was 'like a rolling tank', although he says it's less influential now, especially with the march of pianists from the Far East. However, much of the drama in Russian music has its roots in extreme experiences that the British can only imagine.

He has returned to play many times, most memorably at the end of winter in 1996. 'Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* [which provoked a riot when premiered in 1913] is a seminal piece, which a lot of us think of as harmonically revolutionary,' he says. 'But you wouldn't if you lived through their springs. We arrived in balaclavas and boots and snow up to our waists. By the time we left, they were in shorts. I remember the thaw sounding like an earthquake, icicles smashing your windscreen, the flooding, flowers you could almost see growing. The savagery of it! No wonder the Russians thought spring was the arrival of a pagan god.'

Nowadays, Mr Donohoe splits his time between performing around the globe, curating his own festival at Fishguard, Pembrokeshire, and teaching. He lives in the West Midlands, convenient for the Birmingham Conservatoire where he's vice-president, and admits enthusiasm for HS2.

Students don't always want to hear their professor's advice about life choices, but he warmly encourages any musician to pursue the most rounded life possible. 'Neurosis is a big "killer" in our profession,' he says. 'I hope I've avoided becoming neurotic by having done so many other things. People with ruthless ambition often end up disappointed and bitter. This will sound like a bit of a pose, but if something I want to happen doesn't happen, I accept it as destiny.' There goes that butterfly again. Pippa Cuckson

On the record

Peter Donohoe plays Scriabin, Rachmaninov and Ravel at the Newbury Spring Festival, Berkshire, on May 20 (0845 521 8218; www.newburyspringfestival.org.uk)

Where is your favourite place in Britain? Hyde Park, London

What is your favourite building? The Kremlin, Moscow

Book? *Plum Pie* (P. G. Wodehouse)

Music? Rachmaninov's *Symphony No 2*

Food? Lentil soup

Holiday? Staying at home

Alternative career? Cold War historian

Who is your hero? Sir Anthony Eden

Ideal dinner guest? Lee Kuan Yew, the late Singaporean Prime Minister





Messing about on the Caribbean

ARE you back from Africa?' people have been asking me, as if I've just shaken the dust from my boots, as if the sort of Friday-night television series I'm currently making happens on the hoof and doesn't require three months' editing and fuss. I got back from Africa before Christmas. I have actually just returned from Antigua, a different place altogether.

‘We were beaten by four seconds... four seconds! I shouldn't have scratched my moustache’

I went there merely to take a desultory role in the regatta, casually planned with a few friends, aboard my boat, *Argyll*. A few people told me they were sort of moseying out to join me and the rest of the crew was made up from the leavings of the dockside and passers-by (and excellent they were, too). ‘It's mostly reaching,’ someone erroneously told me, so I didn't think much about it until I got there, when I became ferociously competitive, totally obsessed and determined to win.

That proved no good to anyone, least of all to *Argyll*. We were disqualified from the first race an hour before it started when we sailed straight through an exclusion zone. Apparently, the entire fleet of some 70 yachts was aware of this no-go area, but not us—we had our radio turned down.

Nevertheless, we fought our way back to a respectable third overall in our class, beaten by four seconds on corrected time. Four seconds! I shouldn't



‘It's moments like these when I wish I hadn't bunked off from swimming lessons at school’

have scratched my moustache or hummed half the opening bars of the *Minute Waltz*.

Thanks to the internet, my other current television series, *The Quizium*, followed me across the Caribbean. It was still being edited in Great Guildford Street on the South Bank, but I would get back to the villa and, after complicated download protocols, peer at Lars Tharp through salty glasses. This was before hopping off to English Harbour to watch the gig racing and eat cream teas served by ladies in flowery hats—a fair impersonation of Bosham in the 1950s.

As I watched these 12ft luggers and single-sailed pram dinghies bobbing among the exploded bath toys of the superyachts, I decided, not for the first time, that this was the sort of sailing I should be doing: proper, amateur yachting—simple, fulfilling and, above all, cheap.

For years, a 10ft dinghy was my only ‘yacht’. It lived on a cut in a muddy salting in a Suffolk creek. We got four hours' sailing

when the tide made it to us and we had to be back before it went out. The sail and mast lived in the shed and we could cross the Stour estuary to swim on the beach in Essex, at Wrabness. This part of the Suffolk Stour is very wide and very shallow and the beach gives way to half a mile of mud, but it suited us—until somebody stole our rudder, mast, sail and the rowlocks out of the back of the truck in the cart lodge.

The last time we put the little tub in the creek, it began to fill with water, so I suggested we try her on the duck pond, where she filled with water. Turned out there was a leak, then. It doesn't matter how small the boat, it's a constant tide of mending, spending and maintenance.

On a sunny Suffolk spring weekend, with only a pattering of light drizzle, I had my photograph taken with the ‘three women in a boat’: journalist Catherine Lerner, training and development consultant Jacq Barnard and landscape architect Lucy Hollis. They're members

of the Deben Rowing Club and, having rowed the Thames, they're now going to tackle the Deben. It will probably take them about a morning if they catch the tide.

The narrow river estuary that runs from Woodbridge to Felixstowe Ferry and debouches opposite Bawdsey (where radar was developed during the Second World War) must be one of the loveliest inlets in Britain. It winds to the sea through gentle banks and offers a quick resumé of all that makes Suffolk a top place: red-brick farmhouses, round churches, stretches of marsh, coverts, sandy cliffs, woods and riverside pubs.

There are probably many who live nearby who have never done the trip and have no idea of its marvels. But how could they? It's not easy unless you have your own boat. 🦆

Griff Rhys Jones is currently appearing in *Slow Train Through Africa* on ITV and *The Quizium* on BBC4. He enjoys messing about in boats

Next week: Kit Hesketh-Harvey

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My favourite painting Bobby Dundas

Bridge over a Pond of Water Lilies by Claude Monet



Bobby Dundas
(Viscount Melville)
is a professional
polo player and
an ambassador for
British Polo Day

Impressionism has always been my favourite movement in art history and, although Manet was considered its father, for me, Monet was the king! I love how he depicts light and reflection in his waterlily-pond series. His brushstrokes and the striking use of his colour palette make it seem as if the lilies are alive and real, so much so that I want to reach out and grab them. Hypnotic in effect, this painting gives me an immediate sense of calm and peacefulness every time I see it, and the thought of sitting down on the edge of the pond with a good book surrounded by such tranquility makes me very happy!



Bridge over a Pond of Water Lilies, 1899, by Claude Monet (1840–1926), 36½in by 29in, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA

John McEwen comments on *Bridge over a Pond of Water Lilies*

MONET'S early career was a struggle. His artistic mother died when he was 16; his father wanted him to join the family grocery business. He married Camille, his favourite model, the first of their children having been scandalously born out of wedlock.

Ernest Hoschedé, a rich Parisian businessman, was an early supporter. He and his wife, Alice, entertained lavishly. In 1876, Monet was commissioned to paint pictures and panels for their *château*. He became Alice's lover and may have fathered her youngest and sixth child; meanwhile, Camille gave birth to their second. Hoschedé went bankrupt.

The Monets and Hoschedés (Ernest fitfully) lived together outside Paris, which was cheaper. When Camille died in 1879, the arrangement continued. Alice jealously destroyed all evidence of Camille, but would neither rejoin nor divorce Hoschedé. Monet left if Hoschedé stayed. He travelled extensively to paint new subjects and was helped financially by his association with the dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, who crucially established an American market (*COUNTRY LIFE*, March 4).

In 1883, Monet rented a house with a garden and watermeadow at Giverny, Normandy. He began to paint sequential subjects. In 1890, he

bought the house. Hoschedé died the following year, leaving Alice free to marry Monet. The Giverny garden became a preoccupation. The footbridge, copied from a Japanese print, was built as a vantage point to contemplate the new lily pond, which replaced the meadow. From 1899, Monet painted 18 views of the bridge and pond, peaceful reflections after years of financial and domestic strife. *Inventing Impressionism: How Paul Durand-Ruel created the Modern Art Market' is at The National Gallery, London WC2, until May 31 (020-7747 2885; www.nationalgallery.org.uk).*



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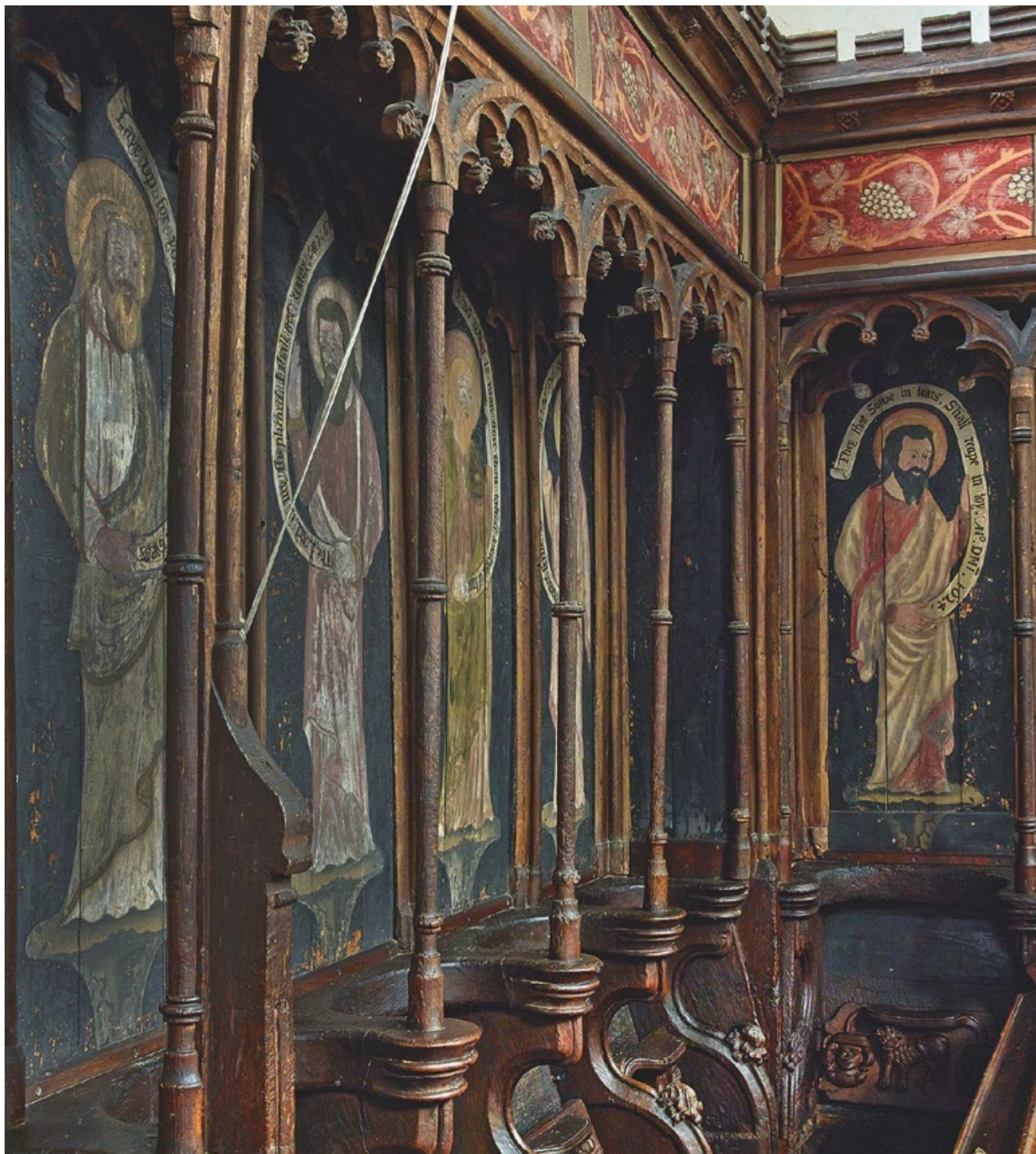


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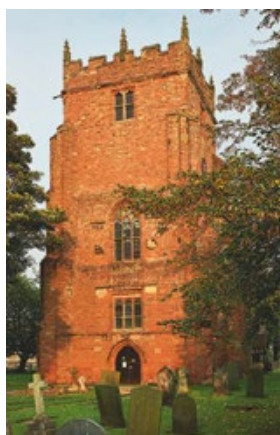
Reaping in joy

Photography by Paul Barker and text by John Goodall



THIS is a detail of the choir stalls dating to about 1400 that survive at Astley. In their original form, the canopies were decorated with a series of paired figures of Apostles and prophets. Each of the Apostles held a scroll inscribed with the sentence from the Creed that they were respectively credited with having composed. The counterpart prophet held a related Biblical quotation.

Along the cornice of the canopy was painted a vine. Prior to the Reformation, the stalls stood in a grand cruciform church with a landmark spire popularly known as 'the Lanthorn of Arden'. This building was badly damaged following the Reformation, but it was repaired in the



**The Church of
St Mary the Virgin,
Astley, Warwickshire**

early 17th century. Its nave and transepts were demolished, a new tower begun and, in 1608, a medieval chapel was rebuilt as the chancel.

These stalls appear to have been reconfigured in their present position at this time. Remarkably, the imagery on them was also retouched and the Latin texts over-painted with quotations from the Psalms and New Testament in English. They constitute a fascinating instance of the careful preservation and adaptation of medieval fittings in the 17th century. The scroll visible to the far right ends the series with the optimistic statement: 'They that sowe in tears, shall reape in ioy. ANo DMI 1624.'

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Re-creating childhood

*The nursery at Audley End, Essex
A property of English Heritage*

A set of watercolour views has helped reconstruct the nursery rooms used in the 1830s and 1840s by Lord Braybrooke's eight children. The process opens a window on the experience of Victorian children, as Tom Boggis explains

Photographs by Paul Highnam



NURSERY are surely among the most transient of all domestic interiors. They grow with a family, changing to accommodate the needs of each new arrival, developing rapidly as the babies grow to children. Then, as surely, they pass from use as, one by one, each child reaches adulthood and leaves their parental home. This whole process of change—and more—has had to be unpicked in the process of re-creating the early-19th-century nursery occupied by the children of the 3rd Lord Braybrooke at Audley End in Essex (**Fig 2**). The work has involved peeling back successive layers of change through the 19th and 20th centuries.

Richard Neville, the future 3rd Lord Braybrooke, and his wife, Lady Jane Cornwallis, came to Audley End in 1820 as newlyweds, when the house had limited facilities to house a young

family. The arrival of their eight children—Richard (1820–61), Mirabel (1821–1900), Louisa (1822–89), Charles (1823–1902), Henry (1824–54), Latimer (1827–1904), Lucy (1828–1919) and Grey (1830–54)—necessitated the fitting up of new nursery rooms. Surviving accounts in the family papers show that this process began in 1822.

The nursery was occupied by the boys until they departed for Eton at the age of 11. For the girls, by contrast, their educational experience—in fact, their whole life until marriage—remained centred on the nursery and adjoining schoolroom.

Even after the children had moved on, the relative remoteness of the nursery preserved it from any substantial subsequent change. Its most recent period of intensive use was during the Second World War, when it was used to billet Polish soldiers who were being trained in secrecy

at the house by the Special Operations Executive.

Derelict, empty and showing water damage, the rooms have remained inaccessible to visitors since the house came into public ownership in 1948.

The starting point for the re-creation of the nursery suite is the fabric of the rooms themselves, which remained battered but intact to the early 21st century. What made possible the re-creation of these spaces in their 1830s form, however, was a small group of mid-19th-century watercolours that show this interior. Some are known to be by the 3rd Lord Braybrooke's daughters and some are dated, but others have neither a recorded artist nor date.

The most important are two very similar views of the day nursery, about which tantalisingly little is securely known. In both of these, the room has been painted from the same viewpoint,



Fig 1 above left: One of the two crucial anonymous views of the day nursery interior showing the furniture and doll's house. Fig 2 above: The reconstructed interior of the day nursery. The patterned wallpaper is copied from surviving fragments in another nursery room



with furniture very similarly arranged and even what appears to be the same sitters—by the fireplace—arranged in the same postures (**Fig 1**). Apart from the contrast of seat upholstery—from red stripes to blue dots—and some alterations to the picture hang, the watercolours show an almost identical scene.

The watercolour with the red-striped seat upholstery was discovered as a loose-leaf insert in a volume of watercolours by Louisa, although, confusingly, it bears little resemblance to Louisa's known work. It is not dated, but the earliest suggested date for it is the late 1830s. The watercolour with blue-dot upholstery is from two albums of watercolours dated 1853.

These albums were the subject of a *COUNTRY LIFE* article by John Cornforth in 1976 (*July 8*), but the identity of their artist remains unclear. One possibility is that they could be

‘It’s tantalising to speculate on how the interests and careers of these children were shaped in these rooms’

the work of Lady Charlotte Neville-Grenville, wife of the 3rd Lord Braybrooke's brother, although they do not compare very well to her drawings at Magdalene College, Cambridge.

The other room in the nursery suite that appears in the watercolours is Lucy's bedroom and this has a definite attribution. It is signed by her sister Mirabel and, although undated, belongs within an album in which most of the other watercolours were painted bet-

ween 1844 and 1855. The watercolour is clearly captioned as a bedroom, although no bed is shown, presumably because it must be behind the artist's vantage point. It shows a Pembroke table set up with writing implements in a corner of the room, an American robin under a glass dome on the mantelpiece and W. R. Bigg's oil painting *The Cottage Door* hanging high over the chimneypiece.

Realising the new interiors from these charming and vivid images has involved a great deal of careful thought and detective work. Where the pieces of evidence fit together, the results have been very satisfying. For example, although none of the original carpets survive, it has been possible to re-create the green, pink and dark-grey chequer-board in Lucy's bedroom with some confidence (**Fig 4**). The possibility that the watercolour shows an oilcloth was considered, but, in one point, it proved ➤





the contrary: the image shows two pattern repeats across the width of the hearth. Historically, carpets were woven in strips of 27in and the width of the surviving fireplace at the corresponding points is exactly 54in.

In the other rooms, it has been impossible to re-create carpet patterns with such exactitude. Appropriate 19th-century carpet designs have therefore been selected from the Woodward Grosvenor archive in Kidderminster, now held by Brintons. They have been woven by Grosvenor Wilton. A crimson-and-maroon swirling design from the first half of the 19th century, in tone similar to the carpet recorded in the day nursery watercolour with the red-striped seat upholstery, was selected for that room and one of the bedrooms. A design by Watson, Wood and Bell dated 1843 was selected for other rooms.

‘The three sisters’ lives were rooted in the nursery for much longer than those of their brothers’

Re-creating the wallpapers presented another intriguing problem. It is not clear how the wallpapers in the watercolours relate to each other or exactly what their patterns were. Here, careful scrutiny of the rooms themselves has offered an answer. One of the surviving original wallpapers in the nursery, a trailing-leaf design, is an early machine-printed wallpaper dating from the 1830s to 1840s, during the occupation of the nursery by the 3rd Lord Braybrooke’s children. It survives almost entirely in one of the subsidiary rooms in the suite and fragments of it were found in some of the other rooms and in some of the cupboards.

It seems possible, therefore, that this one bold pattern was used to decorate the entirety of the suite. Allowing for artistic licence, its pattern could be reconciled with the evidence of the watercolours. This paper has, therefore, been conserved where it remained intact and reproduced for the other nursery rooms by Anstey Wallpaper.

The crucial surviving nursery furnishing is the doll’s house, now restored



according to the watercolours to its historic position in the day nursery. The doll’s house dates from the 1820s and 1830s and is remarkable for the completeness of its interior decoration and furnishings. The contents consist of a mix of bought, specially commissioned and homemade elements created by the Neville children. Materials were taken by them from whatever was available in the house, including 1780s curtain material from the Robert Adam Dining Parlour used to make the green curtains in the doll’s house (*COUNTRY LIFE*, September 24, 1998) (Fig 3).

The vibrant greens, blues, pinks and yellows of the wallpapers, typical of early-19th-century Regency taste, could originally have been lining papers for boxes and trunks.

Unfortunately, 19th-century inventories of the house offer no detailed account of the nursery furniture, so appropriate pieces have been acquired for the rooms. The watercolours suggested the rooms were furnished with earlier Georgian furniture, relegated to the nursery once no longer considered fashionable for the state rooms. Certainly, a view of the schoolroom—an interior adjacent to the nursery suite, but distinct from it—clearly shows one of the bookcases from Robert Adam’s

Fig 3 preceding pages: A detail of the doll’s house. The children must have collected old papers and cloth from the house; the furnishings include some fabrics taken from the state apartments.
Fig 4 above: Lucy Neville’s bedroom as restored, with its chequer-board carpet

library for Sir John Griffin Griffin, a room dismantled by the 3rd Lord Braybrooke in the early 19th century.

Modern chintzes and furnishing fabrics were chosen in sympathy with early-19th-century designs, the Audley End watercolours and other contemporary sources, including the watercolours of Mary Ellen Best and illustrations and descriptions in J. C. Loudon’s *An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* and *The Workwoman’s Guide*. A red stripe was sourced for the day nursery seat upholstery and complimentary, but different, bright floral chintzes were mixed throughout the rooms.

The newly opened nursery at Audley End gives a sense not just of these very colourful and eclectically furnished rooms, but sets the lives of the children who grew up here in a fascinating context. Richard served in the Grenadier Guards and went on to become the 4th Lord Braybrooke, whose interest in natural history is evident in the large amounts of taxidermy in the state rooms. His brother Charles, as the 5th Lord Braybrooke, was responsible for much of the current arrangement and display of Richard’s bird and mammal specimens in the house. A keen cricketer at school, Charles laid out the cricket pitch at Audley End by the lake in front of the house, which continues to be used today.

Latimer spent 49 years as Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and became the 6th Lord Braybrooke in 1902. Henry and Grey were both killed, within days of each other, in action in the Crimean War—Henry at the age of 30 and Grey at 24.

The three sisters’ lives were rooted in the nursery for much longer than those of their brothers. Louisa was interested in botany, Lucy was a pianist and Mirabel enjoyed painting. Unlike her sisters, Mirabel never married. All three remained in contact with their old governess, Miss Dormer, well into adult life. It’s tantalising to speculate on how the interests and careers of these children were shaped in the nursery at Audley End. Whatever the case, it is once more possible to visit their rooms and experience part of the world they inhabited. 🐦

Acknowledgements: Dorian Church, Gareth Hughes, Phillippa Mapes, Helen Pickles, Mary Schoeser, Annabel Westman

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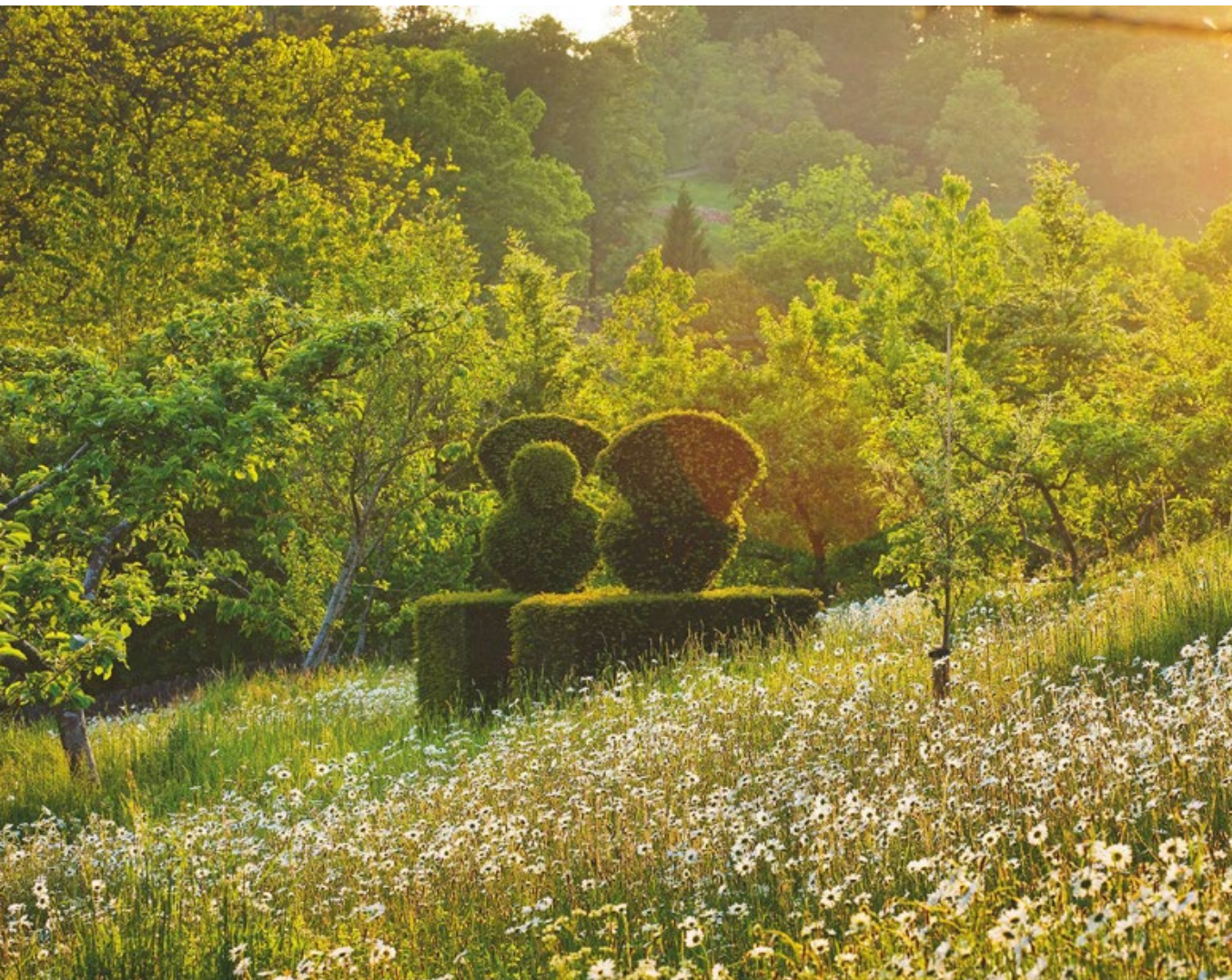
Lighting the touchpaper of Nature

Rockcliffe, Upper Slaughter, Gloucestershire

Taking the long view, garden designer Emma Keswick has spent 25 years creating and refining the gardens of her family's Cotswolds home. Tania Compton explores

Photographs by Clive Nichols





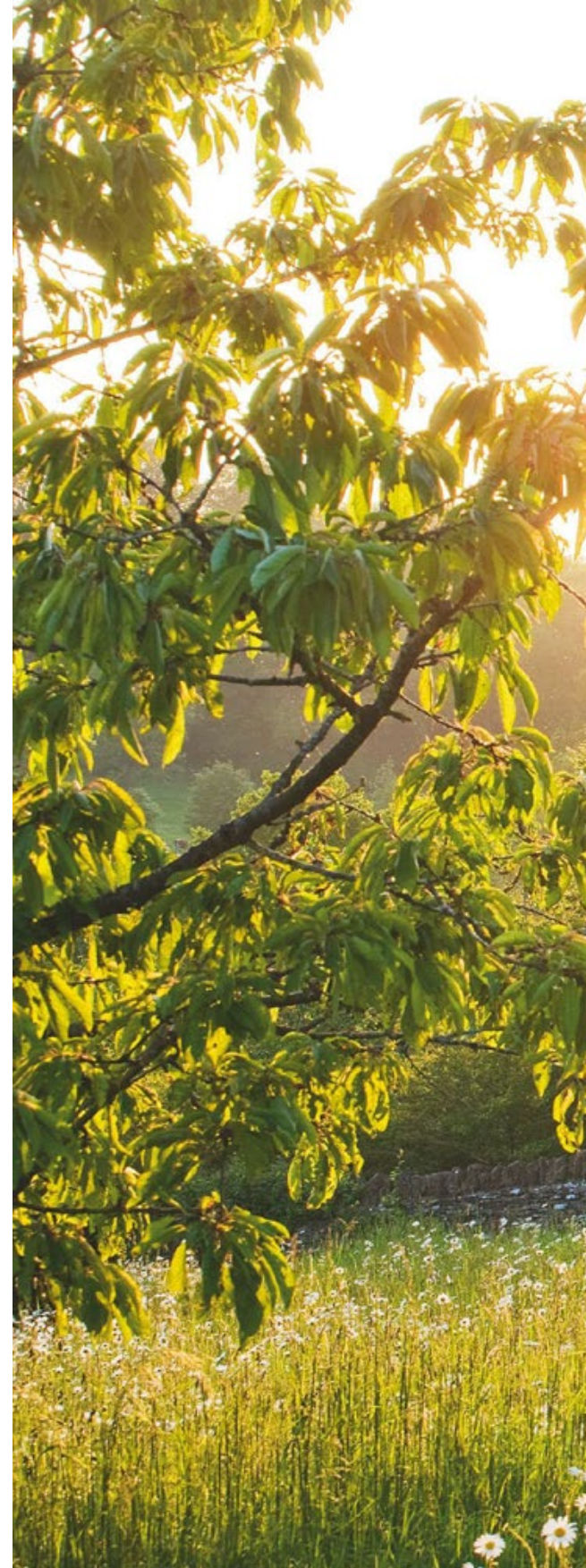
IF you stuck a pin into a map at Northleach in the Cotswolds and cast a radial swoop of 15 miles in all directions, you would have a circle within which every picture-postcard village must boast between one and a handful of virtuoso traditional English country gardens. Turn this circle into an imaginary clock face and, where the hour hand reaches one o'clock, is an eight-acre garden created by Emma Keswick that has reached a pinnacle of English country-garden perfection.

The Brontë-esque name Rockcliffe suggests a house sitting on the edge of a windswept, craggy chasm, but there's nothing remotely Gothic or forbidding about the 1860 honey-coloured manor house, with the addition of its beautifully proportioned wings, orangery and mansard roof designed by Simon and Emma Keswick's friend, the architect Nicholas Johnston. The view from the south-east-facing front door is over countryside more appropriately conjured by the name of the local village, Lower Swell, nestling in the idyllic contours of Heythrop hunting country.

The name Rockcliffe makes more sense at the rear of the house, where a wooded slope leads down to a lake formed by damming of the River Eye. According to Mrs Keswick: 'Any

gardener with a spade certainly knows when they hit the "cliff" that lurks under our shallow Cotswold brash.' It's hard to fathom now, but, being exposed and cold (at 550ft above sea level) with nutrients leached away with every cloudburst, Rockcliffe was a forlorn place without a garden when the Keswicks first came here in 1981. They then returned to Hong Kong, where they have lived off and on throughout their marriage, so the creation of the garden only got under way in 1990.

Above: Dove-tailed conversation: a pair of yew birds, surrounded by moon daisies.
Below: Fruit cages need not be dull—fretwork and finial ornaments lift them into another dimension





By this time, Mrs Keswick was itching to get going. 'I have gardening in my blood. Both my grandmother and great aunt were wonderful gardeners and it's from them that I developed a love of plants. Wherever we have lived, even if I only had a rooftop balcony in intense heat, I've always wanted to grow plants. Luckily, I also instinctively knew that structure is supremely important. Get that right first and then light the touchpaper of Nature.'

The plant enthusiast in her aims to have a bloom for every day of the year on her desk, but it's the Mrs Keswick who trained as a garden designer who remains on alert during her many daily walks around the garden. Like most characterful and atmospheric gardens, Rockcliffe's has developed as a result of walking

Above: On high ground above the kitchen garden, the dovecote's design is an unapologetic amalgam of buildings Emma Keswick has seen on her travels.

Preceding pages: The steep Cotswold slopes ensure magnificent views of the house and its fine trees

and observing, rather than from a prescribed masterplan. Year on year, developments have accrued to transform it into the wonderful assemblage of enclosures you see today, shifting in mood from intimate to outward-looking, but all peppered by sensational and prodigiously healthy planting.

'I believe most gardening ideas are triggered by a memory, then refined and reproduced to suit the site,' confides Mrs Keswick. 'Much of what I've done here has been unconsciously inspired by an element of something I saw in a garden on my travels.'

The beech obelisks that taper to elongate the perspective leading from the house to the ha-ha were inspired by a row of statues, similarly positioned, in the garden of the Palazzo Corsini in the heart of Florence.

‘I believe most gardening ideas are triggered by a memory, then refined to suit the site’

A trip to Helen Dillon's Dublin garden sparked Mrs Keswick's love of *Cornus controversa* Variegata, encouraging her to place six around her rectangular fishpond. Their tiered branches now touch from opposite sides, floating above a statue of Nandi the bull, the mythological attendant of the Hindu god Shiva. ➤



The dovecote is an unapologetic amalgam of buildings Mrs Keswick has admired on her travels around British gardens and it's become a catalyst to visitors, so the baton of inspiration is now being handed on. The topiary doves in yew, ascending the slope leading up the orchard to the dovecote, have prompted one of Mrs Keswick's godchildren with an idea for a book.

These, and the other topiary in the garden, are of paramount importance

to Mrs Keswick, giving a punctuation of solidity and height that anchor the billowing, romantic planting she feels suits Rockcliffe. Chess-pawn-shaped yews thread in a visual sequence through various adjoining areas of the garden, but Mrs Keswick uses yew in conjunction with lime, hornbeam and beech, which she feels help to tone down the deadening effect of too much matte-black green. 'Topiary is also always at its best

Mrs Keswick's disciplined approach ensured the evergreen structure was created early on. 'The gardeners are master pruners,' she says

in autumn and winter, which can be agonisingly long here, but the key is that the gardeners are master pruners.'

Mrs Keswick's desire to temper structure with softness has been put into striking practice on the wide, south-facing terrace that echoes the footprint of the house. 'We had every type of box disease, so I ripped the whole lot out and asked Rupert Golby to help me with the overhaul.' Mr Golby, a Cotswolds-based designer ➤



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who has a profound understanding of what plants do well where—and an intimate knowledge of every fold in the Cotswolds—collaborated with Mrs Keswick and came up with a concoction that includes various salvias, such as *Salvia candelabrum*, *S. glutinosa* and purple sage *S. officinalis* Purpurascens, as well as santolina and teucrium that, with regular clipping, remain bushy and formed.

Scented daphnes, roses, honeysuckles and *regale* lilies, euphorbias and cistus congregate around obelisks and buns of yew. ‘The planting is so varied that it feels as if there’s a surprise revealed every time I open my bedroom curtains.’

The terrace is also home to some of Rockcliffe’s many large planters that give Mrs Keswick a chance to ring the changes and grow lots of new plants from seed and cuttings, indulging any particular new plant cravings. Cold frames are an unscientific, but revealing, barometer of the love and attention being dispensed in any garden. At Rockcliffe, they’re as exuberant and neat as the kitchen garden in which they reside.

‘The planting is so varied that it feels as if there’s a surprise revealed every time I open my curtains ,

Mrs Keswick and her team of three gardeners, headed by Thomas Underdorfer, love growing plants from seed, so that drying heads cover various tables in the orangery in autumn, when carpets of *Cyclamen hederifolium* cover the bases of pleached limes and myriad hedges. Likewise, the dry bases of beech trees have become the happiest spot for naturalising home-grown *martagon* lilies.

As the borders and enclosures around the house are established and thriving, Mrs Keswick has more recently turned her attention to planting trees in the paddock beyond the orchard: ‘It’s the only thing I regret not doing sooner.’ Trees with two seasons

Walk this way: an attractive path provides perspective and direction. The border is deep enough to give a sense of billowing, romantic profusion and includes astrantias, roses, hardy geraniums, foxgloves, peonies and thalictrums

of interest, such as the blossoming and fruiting *Malus hupehensis*, rise out of grass that is studded with Tenby daffodils and ox-eye daisies, soft meadows with a high proportion of flowering British natives being one of the compensations for only having a few inches of stone-studded soil atop a cliff. Such conditions are hard to fathom when you see the borders and lushness of the planting in this glorious Cotswold garden and, at 25 years of age, it’s now in its prime. 🐦

Rockcliffe, Upper Slaughter, Gloucestershire. The garden will be open on Wednesdays June 10 and 24, 12pm–6pm, for the National Gardens Scheme charities (www.ngs.org.uk) and June 17, 10am–6pm, for the British Red Cross (www.redcross.org.uk). An account of the creation of the garden at Rockcliffe by Emma Keswick will appear in ‘Private Gardens of England’, to be published this autumn. A proportion of the royalties from the book will go towards the establishment of an archive of garden design at The Garden Museum in Lambeth, of which Emma Keswick is a trustee (www.gardenmuseum.org.uk)



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The pleasures of a brief encounter

I'VE lost count of the number of times I've been asked to recommend a garden plant that is evergreen and will flower all the year round. In mischievous mood, I'm tempted to suggest gorse. 'When gorse is in bloom, kissing is in season' goes the old saw. The country folk of yore were more observant than the townies of today, as they knew that the spiky bush is seldom without at least one or two of those bright yellow flowers that are scented so deliciously of coconut.

However, the truth of the matter is that flowers that bloom all the year round would quickly pall. We need variety in our gardens and, for me, our cool, temperate climate, with its endless seasonality, is a rich blessing.

At the opposite end of the flowering spectrum are beauties that have but a single, spectacular season. For me, they are prized treasures, not to be spurned, but to be anticipated eagerly, as although they may bloom only fleetingly, they are all the more appreciated. These firework plants are the leavening of the loaf, a fleeting treat without which life would be all the poorer.

An accusation frequently directed at peonies, for example, is that their flowering season is too brief. I have friends who will have no truck with them, saying that, for all their spectacle, their season of beauty is so short as to be laughable. Oh, but a late spring without Sarah Bernhardt in her soft, double-pink glory that is the floral equivalent of Fragonard's



Floral fireworks: the spectacular yet fleeting display of peonies should be savoured, not spurned

The Swing, Coral Sunset with its astonishing salmon-pink goblets or Bowl of Beauty, a nest of creamy white icicles held in a dish of pink, would be a poorer season.

There are rich-crimson peonies and there are those of pure white. There are singles with a central boss of gold or cream and others that are so double the petals seem impossible to count. Plant them where they can show off when in bloom and where other plants will make up for their dullness when the blooms fade and you can mask their deficiencies without depriving yourself of their Maytime delight.

Not that growing peonies is always easy. It can be, but you need

to remember one or two important requirements. The most critical of these is planting depth. When committing a pot-grown peony to the earth, on no account bury it too deeply, for to do so will surely deprive you of flowers for many a year. The yam-like roots (massive, sweet-potato look-alikes) need to be only fractionally below the surface of the soil.

Next, don't feel that you have to dig them up and divide them every three or four years as is the case with many herbaceous perennials. Peonies love lazy gardeners who leave their clumps alone, to fatten and grow more generous with the years.

Peonies are not especially demanding when it comes to growing conditions, asking only for a spot in full sun and well-drained soil. A sprinkling of rose fertiliser in March will encourage them, along with a mulch of well-rotted manure or garden compost, and then, in April, when their almost prehistoric-looking shoots of red and maroon start to push up from the soil, you can wait with bated breath to see how many flowers they will produce.

They will also appreciate some support in the form of circular wire grids on legs, placed over the shoots when they're 6in high so that the wire circle itself sits about 1ft above the ground. Soon, the shoots will grow through the supports and the leaves will mask the framework.

Pests and diseases? There are assorted blotches and blights—grey mould (*botrytis*) is the one most likely to be a pain—and ants will clamber over them in search of sticky honeydew. But if the plants are grown well in the airy, sunlit conditions they like, then neither of these problems should pose a great long-term threat.

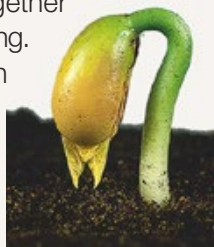
And if you really can't come to terms with the short flowering season, do as I do and grow peonies in rows on the veg patch for cutting. Walking back to the kitchen with an armful of blooms is the most extravagant feeling of all. 🐦

My Secret Garden by Alan Titchmarsh is published by BBC Books (£25)

Next week: Gravetye echiums

Horticultural aide memoire No. 20: Sow French beans

The French bean is deservedly a favourite and is simple enough to grow, but it will not germinate in a cold soil, which effectively, in this country, means you have to wait until the second half of May. Set out a double row of canes, lashed together at the top, and cover the framework with bean netting. With a trowel, make holes at 4in intervals along each side and drop a couple of beans into each. When they come through, remove the weaker of the two and gently nudge the winner towards the framework. They'll soon get the hang of it. **SCD**



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Chelsea Flower Show Preview

The week that Chelsea rocks

Remarkable stonework from Chatsworth and painstaking plantsmanship of a very English kind bring a welcome shift of emphasis to the show this year, reveals Mark Griffiths



ALTHOUGH as spectacular and enjoyable as ever, the Chelsea Flower Show is having one of its quiet years in terms of design innovation. Just one of the Show Gardens stands out and it would do so even if the competition were stiffer.

The **Laurent-Perrier Chatsworth Garden** sees a return to Chelsea for

Also look out for...

As always, there are numerous new introductions of irises, clematis, yet more heucheras, a perennial snapdragon—*Antirrhinum* Pretty in Pink—and *Pyracantha* Golden Paradise, whose yellow leaves do not, I fear, dissuade me from wanting to consign all firethorn to the pyre. But I shall be taking a closer look at:

Roses

In the Grand Pavilion, two literary introductions from **David Austin Roses (GPF7)** beckon. Aptly, *Rosa* Sir Walter Scott is a cross involving the tough little Scotch rose, *R. pimpinellifolia*.



A compact bush, it bears pleasingly neat and narrow foliage and a long succession of small, richly fragrant double flowers. Passing from deep to pale pink, the petals are pointed and irregular in size and shape, giving the blooms a tousled, antique air.

Rosa Desdemona (left) is a notable addition to David Austin's cast of cultivars named for Shakespeare's characters. A broad and vigorous shrub to about 4ft tall, it's covered in myrrh-scented chalice-shaped flowers all summer long. As if recapitulating the heroine's fate, these turn from blushing bride peach in the bud, to innocent white when full-blown.

Dahlias

When we need some flash and dazzle, dahlias are perfect for late-summer pots on a terrace, in visual quarantine from the garden's decorum. To consult a living catalogue of cultivars old and new, visit the **National Dahlia Collection's**



The Laurent-Perrier Chatsworth Garden by Dan Pearson (above), with huge rocks from the estate (right)



Sentebale—Hope in Vulnerability, presented by young designer Matthew Keightley, evokes the wild landscapes of Lesotho on behalf of Prince Harry's charity for vulnerable children

Dan Pearson after an 11-year absence. His design is inspired by two areas of Chatsworth's 105-acre gardens: the picturesque trout stream that snakes through the arboretum and the labyrinthine rock garden. These were begun in 1835 and 1842 respectively, by that giant among horticulturists Sir Joseph Paxton, when he was gardener to another horticultural visionary, the 6th Duke of Devonshire.

Recently, the restoration of both features has been extraordinarily sensitive, accepting that time and Nature have transformed them in ways that, far from always needing correction, may be aesthetic and ecological improvements. Rather than being cleared wholesale, invading trees and

wilderness are edited, with some removed to create vistas and others left and cherished. The emerging result is an accidental Arcadia of a kind that no designer could ordain—unless he happens to be Mr Pearson.

Mr Pearson is the pioneer of a philosophy that fuses wild with cultivated to create landscapes of remarkable poetry. Although these appear spontaneous, like the long-formed products of purely natural forces, they are, in fact, painstakingly calculated and on-song within months

of their installation, rather than taking decades of abandonment to achieve their casual-seeming perfection. He is, then, the ideal designer to respond to the Paxton features at Chatsworth, where horticulture at its most magisterial was overtaken by Nature and restoration is now producing a hybrid of the two.

Inspired by this transition, his Chelsea exhibit, created by Crocus, consists of twin acid woodland glades in which delicately coloured ornamentals dance as if for joy, amid oaks ➤



Iris Seedlings by Sir Cedric Morris (1943): a range of irises bred by the artist will be exhibited by their custodian, Sarah Cook

display (GPN3). But it's the tale of rediscovery told by a very different National Collection that provides the most poignant and horticulturally important exhibit in the Great Pavilion, if not in the entire show.

Cedric Morris irises

Iris takes its name from the Greek and Latin term for rainbow and I doubt anyone will ever understand its floral spectrum better than Sir Cedric Morris, one of the most enchanting, if undervalued, British painters. From the 1940s onwards, his canvases were filled with bearded irises (*I. germanica* and its kin) in shades of purple, blue, opal, pink, bronze, buff, yellow

and white. In some, the blooms were bicolor—for example, golden upper petals and chestnut lower petals. Others were traced with contrasting veins, robed in shimmering dark velour or laced with white marbling and stipple. Many displayed the iridescent gradations of azure, rose and mauve that gave *Irises* its name.

In 1937, Sir Cedric established the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing. Three years later, it moved to Benton End, a farmhouse at Hadleigh in Suffolk, where he lived and taught until his death in 1982. There, he raised thousands of irises from seed, naming any that deserved a permanent place in the border



and other native species. Rugged boulders and rippling water punctuate this idyll, in homage to both Paxton's art and Derbyshire's natural terrain.

Not only is this beautiful green space the best-conceived and most technically accomplished garden in the show, it's an important meditation on the nature of gardens anywhere. Happily, it will find a permanent home at Chatsworth, where it can be seen from spring 2016 as part of the trout-stream regeneration project.

Among the Artisan Gardens is the only other exhibit to present something

significant in design. Strangely, Japan's most widespread type of garden is all but unknown in the West. We're familiar enough with the austere rock and gravel compositions often associated with temples; with stroll gardens, the lyrical landscapes that grace palaces and parks; and with the intimate green enclosures that cradle tea houses. But the town garden (for want of a better—or any—term) has been a well-kept secret until now.

Japan's Edo Period (1603–1868) brought an end to centuries of

Edo no Niwa, by Kazuyuki Ishihara, is a faithful re-creation of a town garden of the Edo Period—they were places for plantsmanship and horticultural hobbyism

territorial skirmishes and civil war. In the new climate of peace and stability, towns flourished—most notably, Edo (Tokyo) itself. *Samurai*, gentry who might once have expected short and turbulent lives, settled in their expanding districts. Some remained in the active service of their feudal masters; others became intellectuals, artists and professionals. Many took up gardening on their new urban plots. In this, they were encouraged by the nation's executive ruler, the Shogun, for whom horticulture was the ultimate improving art.

and on canvas—about 90 varieties in all, many with the Benton prefix (*COUNTRY LIFE*, April 29, 2015). But, within a few years of his death, if gardeners could be bothered at all with bearded irises, it was with new, compact and loudly coloured cultivars. Many Benton End beauties disappeared from gardens and the nursery trade.

Over the years, Sarah Cook, Hadleigh-born and former head gardener at Sissinghurst Castle, has developed the National Plant Collection of irises bred by Sir Cedric (*COUNTRY LIFE*, July 20, 2011). The highlight of the Great Pavilion in 2015 is a gloriously romantic exhibit of these irises (**GPG2**) as tracked down by her and

Right: *Primula x anisodoxa* Kevock Surprise makes its debut on the Kevock exhibit

grown for showing (and, ultimately, for sale) by Howard Nurseries, on the Suffolk/Norfolk border.

Woodland perennials

A good dozen nurseries exhibiting in the Grand Pavilion this year are specialists in perennials, bulbs, shrubs and trees for shade or woodland. The would-be English olive grove (forecast for the past two decades by climate-change advocates) has, thank teeming heavens, reverted to ferny glade.

Pioneered by William Robinson in the 19th century—and elevated to an art by Beth Chatto



in the 20th—shade gardening has long been a British forte. It suits our climate. If pushed, most of our leading plant connoisseurs would admit to preferring species that like a dapple



Among the charming Artisan Gardens is A Trugmaker's Garden, celebrating the traditional garden baskets of East Sussex

Meanwhile, a merchant class was emerging, affluent and socially competitive. Emulous of the *samurai*, they, too, fell to cultivating the grounds of their city dwellings. Businesses followed suit: a garden was a vital asset for any inn or restaurant that wanted to make its mark. Nurseries proliferated to serve this green-fingered metropolitan *bourgeoisie*, as did garden designers, publications, flower shows and horticultural societies—all uncannily modern-seeming.



A Perfumer's Garden in Grasse, by James Basson for L'Occitane

For their features, these new gardens looked to their grander antecedents, abounding in rocks, gravel, lanterns, moss, cascades and pools. But their scale and ethos were entirely different. Small, concentrated and closely related to the house, they were private worlds, microcosms, and it's in this that their magic lies. They were also places for plantsmanship, for collecting and horticultural hobbyism: many of the Japanese cultivars most familiar in the West were selected for—or in—them.

One of these domestic paradises appears at Chelsea this year. **Edo no Niwa** ('Edo Garden') is Kazuyuki Ishihara's re-creation of an Edo Period town garden, complete with *engawa*, the all-important verandah on which householders would sit and

contemplate their miniature domain of lakes, mountains and woods. Although this design is a period reconstruction, countless such gardens survive and they're still being made, but, as I mentioned, they're little-known outside Japan.

By turns tranquil and intense, this is a rare glimpse of the true face of a great gardening culture at home. For those who wish to create their own Japanese gardens, this, rather than the famous public or institutional landscape masterpieces, is the model to study.

Dedicating *Paradisus* (*Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris*), his encyclopedia of cultivated plants, to Queen Henrietta Maria in 1629, John Parkinson described the book as 'this speaking Garden'. But what ➤

of shadow, at least, and a damp woodsy soil. Recent decades have seen a steady influx of introductions for sylvan sites and the launch of nurseries devoted to them.

We've also realised that woodland is no prerequisite; that these plants and this look suit smaller plots, and walled city gardens especially. Collectively, those nurseries' displays this year make for an exceptionally fresh, cool and verdant big top. **KBH**



Clematis Cloudburst, from Thorncroft



for him was a figure of speech has become the reality of many Chelsea gardens in recent years. Created to represent causes, policies and phenomena (most of which have no colourable connection to horticulture), they not only speak; they argue, woo and plead.

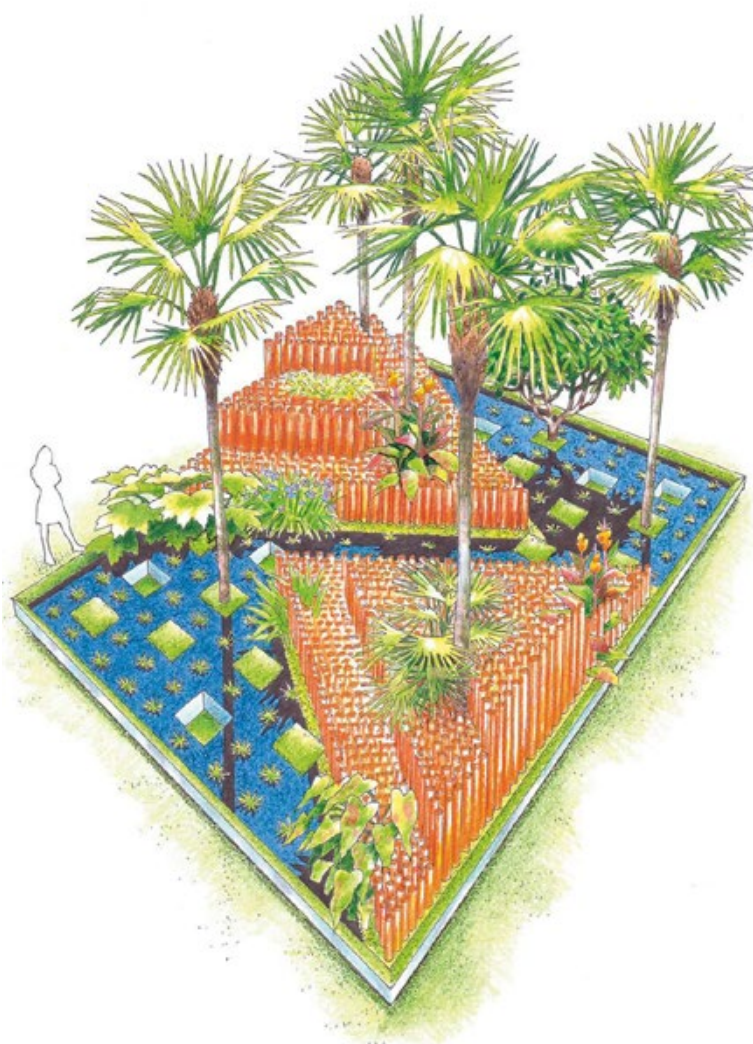
Overall, the tendency is harmful. Good gardens, like great music, begin where words end. In these sermonising and showcasing exhibits, however, the garden medium is all too often secondary to the verbal message and seldom as articulate or deserving of our attention.

But not in all of them. Among the Show Gardens, the most striking exception is **Sentebale—Hope in Vulnerability**. Designed by Matthew Keightley, it celebrates the opening of the Mamohato Children's Centre, a major development for Sentebale, the charity established by Prince Harry and Prince Seeiso to help

Lesotho's most vulnerable and needy children. Evoking the kingdom's landscape, flora and buildings, this design presents an allegory of the passage from wilderness and isolation to safe haven and society. Its message is powerful, moving and inseparable from the quality of the garden.

Another exception is **A Perfumer's Garden in Grasse**, designed by James Basson. This vivid and intensely aromatic patchwork of flowers and herbs re-creates a traditional Provençal perfumer's plot down to the tufa, a material characteristic of Grasse, that forms its sun-soaked walls, watercourses and paths. Here, the sponsor, L'Occitane, is making a point not only about its industry, but also about horticulture.

In Provence, the growing of plants for perfumery went into steep decline with the rise of synthetics and cheap imports. Latterly, however, some



Left: An antique air: Rosa Sir Walter Scott, launched by David Austin, is a cross involving R. pimpinellifolia, the tough Scotch rose.

Above: The World Vision Garden by John Warland is an abstracted statement about water, rice and nutrition

scent manufacturers have been backing a revival of domestic cultivation, partly out of feeling for France's rural environment and economy, and partly because the product is just as inimitable as a wine with uniquely great *terroir*. Not to be sniffed at, this garden about gardening conveys that good news with élan. 🐦

This year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show takes place on May 19 to 23 (RHS members only on May 19 and 20) at The Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London SW3. All tickets must be booked in advance. There are no sales on the day. Visit www.rhs.org.uk/chelsea

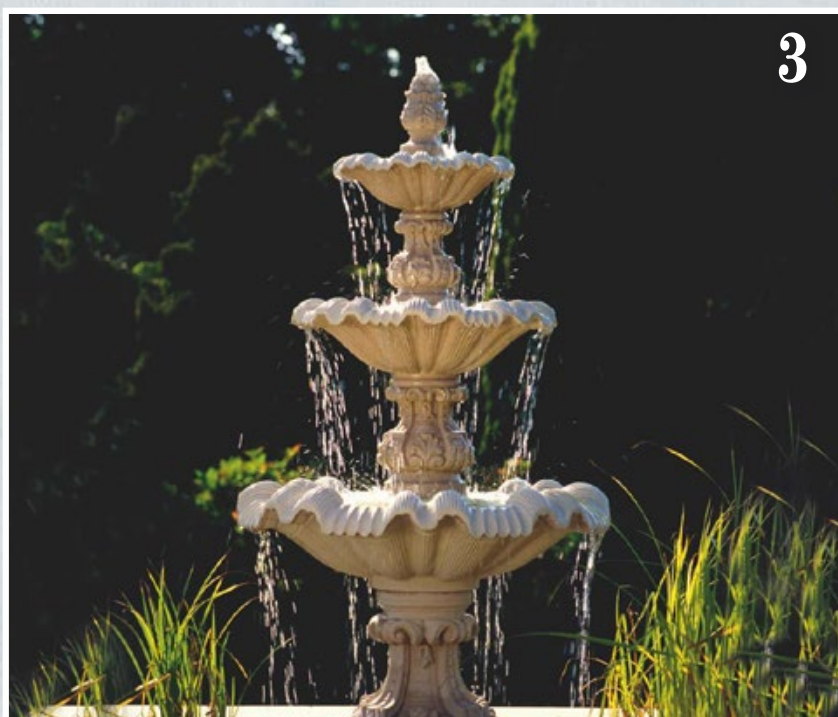
Beyond the show

- The Sloane Street shop of Jo Malone will be offering for sale its new candle, **White Lilac & Rhubarb**, 'the scent of an early summer garden', with all sale proceeds (minus VAT) going to charities including St Mungo's, Bristol, and Thrive, the society for horticultural therapy.
- The fourth **Chelsea Fringe** (May 16 to June 7, www.chelseafringe.com) has scores of off-piste events across London and farther afield. For example, at Nine Elms on the South Bank, a **'Horticultural Spa & Apothecary Experience'**—part greenhouse and part pneumatic bubble—invites people into 'a futuristic tea ceremony'. Once inside, visitors will be served tea through clouds of fragrant medicinal fog. On June 7, **Pick up a Stitch**, in the Inner Temple Gardens, London EC4, features a pop-up knitting club, inviting people to create colourful wool decorations for the garden's trees and statues.



Chelsea exhibitors 2015

Next week sees passionate gardeners gather together at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. We have selected some inspirational contributors of garden design exhibiting at the show



HERE are four garden companies exhibiting at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2015: **1.** Fulfil your dream by choosing a Scotts summerhouse — the perfect hideaway for your garden. **Scotts of Thrapston** offers a wide choice of stylish summerhouses and garden buildings, including a range designed in conjunction with the Royal Horticultural Society. Scotts has exhibited at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show for more than 40 years and is in its 95th year of operation. Stand number WA12 (01832 732366; www.scottsofthrapston.co.uk). **2.** **Paul Vanstone's** elegant marble and bronze sculptures will be shown on the Coombe Sculpture Garden's stand at the Chelsea Flower Show. Stand number WA1 on Western Avenue. More information on Paul's work can be

found at www.paulvanstone.co.uk. Details on the garden can be found at www.coombesculpturegarden.co.uk. **3.** **Haddonstone** will exhibit the Eton College Fountain at the Chelsea Flower Show, alongside a range of other designs including the Seasons Statues and Plaques, the exquisite Westonbirt Urn and the new Gibbs Classical Porch. Other Haddonstone designs range from bird baths, sundials and planters to balustrades, follies and fireplaces. Stand number SR43 (01604 770711; www.haddonstone.com). **4.** **Rupert Till** will be showcasing his latest unique copper and bronze award-winning wire sculptures, *Mad March Hares*, *Shells* and the artist's own Shetland pony. Stand number RGB3 (07921 771284; www.ruperttill.com).



A taste for origami

*Marwood Hill Gardens,
Barnstaple, Devon*

Jacky Hobbs meets the holder of the National Collection of *Iris ensata*, the pocket-handkerchief-like Japanese water irises that illuminate a famous Devonshire garden's streamsides at high summer each year

Photographs by Clive Nichols

IN June and July, the Devonshire streamsides at Marwood Hill Gardens erupt with multitudes of blooms, such as candelabra primulas and astilbes, that relish the damp soil. Threaded among them are numerous examples of the so-called Japanese water iris, *Iris ensata*, representing more than 130 different cultivars. Their showy flowers, many of them reminiscent of the intricate foldings of *origami* paper, ornament the riverbank weaving its way through the heart of the garden. The spectacle extends from the upper lake, following the watercourse downstream for some 500 yards, culminating in a ravishing display around a broad, ox-bow bend.

Tall and elegant in their shimmering white, mauve and deep-purple hues, the irises have dwelt in the gulley for more than 20 years, forming an acclaimed national collection that was initiated by the garden's founder, Dr James Smart (1914–2002). Dr Smart brought back many selections from

Clockwise (from top left): Gei-Sho-Ui, an old, strong, double-flowered cultivar listed by Yokohama Nursery in Japan in the 1890s; Kozasa Gawa, registered in 1993; Royal Purple, dating from 1924, is one of the largest-flowered doubles; and, with purple pencillings on lilac, Let Me See, registered in 1989 by Ackerman. Facing page: Head gardener Malcolm Pharoah in the lower bog garden with luminous Moonlight Waves

nurseries in America in the 1980s and added to them the cultivars he gathered from Europe and, particularly, Japan, where centuries of hybridising have produced an assortment of exquisite single, double and multi-petalled forms.

In their Far Eastern homelands, *ensata* irises light up damp, acidic meadows and, in ancient times, seed was gathered from wild blooms and sown on the verges of the rice fields. With no written calendar, farmers were guided by nature; when the cherry ➤





Above: Pale and interesting: an unnamed *ensata* in the bog garden.
Right: Isi No Nami, another tetraploid from the USA



trees blossomed, hunting in the forest was suspended and fields were cultivated. When the irises came into bloom, announcing the onset of the rainy season, it was time to transplant the rice.

These irises were regarded as a good omen, so their cut blooms became a part of ceremonies and festivals and new cultivars were jealously guarded where they were bred. Tokyo, an important breeding hotbed (famed for Edo cultivars) extended large spectacular drifts of irises into the outlying paddy fields, which were flooded as buds came into flower, to create beautiful reflecting pools rather than horticultural necessities.

Only noblemen were allowed to witness this lofty vision until the late 1860s, when the Emperor decreed that the public, for a small payment, could also enjoy them. Gardens were built with reflecting pools, solely for *I. ensata* display. The older, outdoor Edo cultivars were hybridised with Japanese indoor varieties, Ise and

Caprician Butterfly, registered in 1984, is a fully double tetraploid bred in the USA and has received the RHS Award of Garden Merit

‘In their Far Eastern homelands, *ensata* irises were sown on the verges of the rice fields’

Higo cultivars, resulting in prized blooms that were so precious, many were banned from export until 1914.

Once the European and American breeders were able to acquire these gems, hybridising greatly increased, so that, by now, more than 5,000 *ensata* cultivars have been named.

Ancient and modern

The ancient *ensatas* were graceful, single flowers and Rose Queen is typical of the original, elegant Japanese style. But, in the way that

they do, breeders worldwide sought to broaden both colour and form, infilling with tones between the widely available purples such as Royal Purple, mauve Iapetus and white Moonlight Waves. They teased out intricately decorated petals, relentlessly pursuing stripes, veining—as in Prairie Chief—and picotee margins, seen in Light at Dawn, whose white petals are ribboned in inky blue.

Another picotee, Gei-Sho-Ui, a very old Japanese cultivar of the 1890s, originally from the renowned Yokohama Nursery, featured in their early catalogues. These exquisite, beautifully illustrated documents now fetch upwards of £1,200 per issue.

Double flower forms, with six falls, were originally created by Japanese breeder Matsudaira (1773–1856). Today, modern double cultivars such as white-and-blue Geisha Gown, silvery white Moonlight Waves and violet Foreign Intrigue show how the traditionally upright standards have ➤

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Growing *Iris ensata*

'The acid soil here is constantly moist,' advises Malcolm Pharoah. 'They don't need to be standing in water, but they need to be constantly damp and, ideally, in full sun.' The waterside mass planting at Marwood Hill (*below*) is reminiscent of their natural oriental habitat.

The irises demand to be fed as well as they are watered—initially, Mr Pharoah plants them in manure-enriched earth, but then feeds them each spring with a liquid seaweed fertiliser to invigorate blooms. 'It takes a year or two to build the plants up; even then, they don't all flower at once, sometimes not even in the same year,' he warns. 'These are not plants for impatient beginners. Moonlight Waves and Ocean Mist are among the more reliable cultivars.'

Irises tend to produce three large individual flowers, one following on from the other, each precious bloom surviving but a few days, especially in hot weather, before being superseded by the next.



been 'dropped', effectively to become falls themselves. The resultant flatter, floppy, horizontal blooms are large and impressive, but they lack grace and balance.

American breeders have voraciously adopted *ensata* irises, pursuing ever more bigger and better hybrids. Breeder W. A. Payne's work (1881–1971) is commemorated in the coveted Payne Medal, the highest accolade attributable to any *ensata* iris.

Towards the end of the 20th century, American breeder McEwan and Japanese breeder Hirao introduced tetraploid cultivars, the double chromosome count facilitating even stronger stemmed, more vigorous plants, even bigger flowers, sometimes with nine to 12 falls, in different colour combinations. Tetraploid irises Let Me See and Ike-No-Sazanami add dash and splash to Marwood Hill gardens, but the real jewel in the crown is Caprician Butterfly.

Clockwise (from top left): **Geisha Gown** dates from **1963; an as yet unnamed seedling, discovered growing in the gardens at Marwood Hill, Devon; lapetus, unfurling; and Rose Queen—something of an anomaly, having been long listed as an *I. laevigata* cultivar (erroneously)—was raised in the early 20th century by the Society for Japanese irises**

This flamboyant cultivar has a double row of fall petals, white based with purple staining and yellow throats, creating flowers bigger than two cupped hands, up to 8in across. It stands more than 3ft tall and is prized both as a garden and cut flower, worthy of its medal haul, which includes the coveted W. A. Payne Medal as well as the RHS Award of Garden Merit.

Marwood Hill's irises are today in the care of head gardener Malcolm Pharoah, who continues the tradition of building the collection, combining historical and contemporary cultivars, but perhaps it is his colourful juxtapositioning of the collection with other exuberant stream-side plants, including another national collection—of Astilbe—that make its waterside viewing so memorable. 🐦
Marwood Hill Gardens, Marwood, Barnstaple, north Devon (01271 342528; www.marwoodhillgarden.co.uk) are open daily from mid March to September

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For Tsar and Country!

Mark Goodman reveals the extraordinary story of an Old Etonian who was awarded the Imperial Russian Army's highest gallantry award four times before dying in action 100 years ago



From college to the Carpathians: George Schack-Sommer wearing his Old Etonian tie (inset) and leading two of his Cossack regiment's horses across the mountains

THE story of George Schack-Sommer is one of the more extraordinary of all the extraordinary stories that were thrown up by the First World War and yet his name is unknown. His anonymity is partly due to the fact that he joined the Russian rather than the British Army, however, he was awarded Russia's highest award for gallantry no fewer than four times.

On leaving Eton in 1907, George became a mining engineer. During a holiday job in a mine in Siberia, he worked with Siberian ponies. As a result, he was interviewed by Capt Scott in 1910, with a view to his taking the role subsequently filled by fellow Etonian Capt Lawrence Oates.

Taking a job in the Tanalyk goldfields, he became proficient in Russian and acquired a love of the country and its people. When the First World War broke out, he therefore decided that the quickest way to the front was to join the Imperial Russian Army. 'Think of the Russian people I live with going off to fight for their country; surely it would look terrible for an Englishman to sit tight and leave it to others,' he reasoned.

After successfully petitioning the Tsar, he joined the 12th Artirsky Hussars. This distinguished regiment was founded in 1651 as a Cossack regiment in the Okhtyrka region of Ukraine, with the role of defending Russia's southern flank from Crimean Tartars.

The regiment was unusual in that it only rode dun-coloured (pale gold) horses, which are a rarity. Each squadron had horses

‘George Schack-Sommer decided that the quickest way to the front was to join the Imperial Russian Army’

matched for hue: dun with dark mane and tail, dun with light mane and tail and one squadron was comprised solely of strawberry-roan-coloured horses. In order to source sufficient dun horses to fill a regiment, it would have required an equine population so large that Russia was probably the only country that could have achieved this. Such was the regiment that Schack-Sommer joined as a mounted trooper in Galicia in late 1914. He was soon in action as the Russian Army moved through the Dukla Pass in the Carpathian Mountains.

On December 29, 1914, he volunteered to find out what he could by making his way as close as possible to the Austrian trenches. 'There was no moon and it was snowing, but the snow on the ground made it light enough to faintly see, and be seen. When about 20 yards from the lines, I heard voices and waited some 20 minutes and ascertained that several men were there. Then I saw two men and they spotted me, so I beat a hasty retreat. They fired twice, but either very

wide or low as I didn't hear the bullets.' For this, George was promoted to corporal and awarded the Cross of St George, 4th Class.

Subsequent actions on February 9 and March 3, 1915, led to his being awarded Class 3 and Class 2 of the Cross. Then, on June 7, during an engagement near the town of Galitch (now Halych, Ukraine), he was shot in the stomach. This deteriorated into peritonitis and he died the following day on the hospital train as it steamed eastwards. He was buried in the cemetery in Tarnopol (now Ternopil) in a common grave with six other comrades. For this final action, he was awarded the Class 1. His commission was confirmed on August 21, 1915.

George died almost exactly a century after the Battle of Waterloo and, in his last letter home, he ended by saying: 'I don't think the playing fields of Eton are any worse than they were 100 years ago!' During the past 100 years, a further 20 Etonians have been awarded the VC, a further 10 have been appointed Field Marshal and many hundreds have been killed in conflict. George's assertion surely still holds true for this century.

The Cross of St George was awarded in four classes, a higher class for each successive award. The holder of Class 1 was automatically commissioned and was entitled to remain seated in the presence of the Tsar. Such was its prestige that, even after the Russian Revolution, the Soviets kept the distinctive black-and-orange striped ribbon for their own highest gallantry award. 🐾



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In drawing, observe relief, not outline.
The relief determines the contour.
The main thing is to be moved, to love,
no hope, no tremble, no live.
Be whole before being an artist!

littlebigriver

Photo: Thomas Allen

© 2010 Thomas Allen



How to keep your head

The complex, multi-dimensional art of portrait sculpture is alive and well, finds Clive Aslet, as he visits the studios of three leading exponents

I AM in what, in other circumstances, would be a North London garage, surrounded by heroines of the French Resistance. There are men, too—a famous actor, a successful businessman—and an elegant Art Deco bathing belle who is about to launch herself off a diving board. It's like a gloriously unpredictable cocktail party in which the guests are stationary and silent, for this is the sculptor Karen Newman's studio.

‘The studio is like a gloriously unpredictable cocktail party in which the guests are stationary and silent,’

We sip tea (green with roasted brown rice) as she explains the challenges of making portraits. ‘I’m trying to isolate a moment,’ she says, ‘in which the different components of the sitter’s personality are revealed.’

To the uninitiated, it may seem that portrait sculpture died with the Victorians but, like Classical architecture, there is, when you look for it, a surprising amount about. To some extent, it has benefited from the surge of interest in portraiture that has established Nicky Philipps, Jonathan Yeo and others as heirs to the tradition of Sargent. However, as Olivia Musgrave, president of the Society of Portrait Sculptors, observes, so much more is involved in the commission of a sculpture than of a painting.

If cast in bronze, the cost of material and labour (making moulds) will amount to several thousand pounds before the artist earns a penny. As a result, some works shown in the society’s annual exhibition, which opens next week, will be made of resin—

bronze is beyond the pocket of all but the most successful artists.

Although individual commissions may be less common, there is still plenty of demand from corporations, town councils and committees that have a hero or event they want to memorialise. These help to keep the techniques of the Renaissance alive, despite the determination of some sectors of the art establishment to forget about them.

Sculpture still seems a natural and appropriate way to remember Nelson Mandela (Parliament Square), Sir John Betjeman (St Pancras station) or even Animals in War (Park Lane), not ➤

Left: Karen Newman, seen here amid her crowd of sculptures, focuses on revealing the ‘different components of the sitter’s personality’.
Below: Detail of Karen’s The Diver



“Who taught me?” asks Ian Rank-Broadley rhetorically. “He’s been dead 100 years”



to mention civic dignitaries and other local figures; if the results, particularly in the latter department, are apt to be unequal, that is all the more reason for would-be clients to consult the society before committing themselves to a large expenditure with long-lasting consequences.

One client with specific and exigent requirements is Madame Tussauds, whose wax-works are made with the same expectation of fidelity to the subject as when the original Madame Tussaud sat at the feet of the guillotine during the French Revolution. This was the museum that aided Karen Newman’s early career—she was employed as a freelancer for 21 years, modelling Stevie Wonder, Eric Clapton, The Duke of Edinburgh and Tony Blair. ‘We had a lot of fun,’ she recalls. Priorities could hardly have been more different from her student days at the Chelsea School of Art, where abstraction ruled and ‘I virtually had to fight to have a model to work from’.



Above: Ian Rank-Broadley, who designed the image of The Queen that appears on British coins, with his clay model of the 15th Lord Lovat.

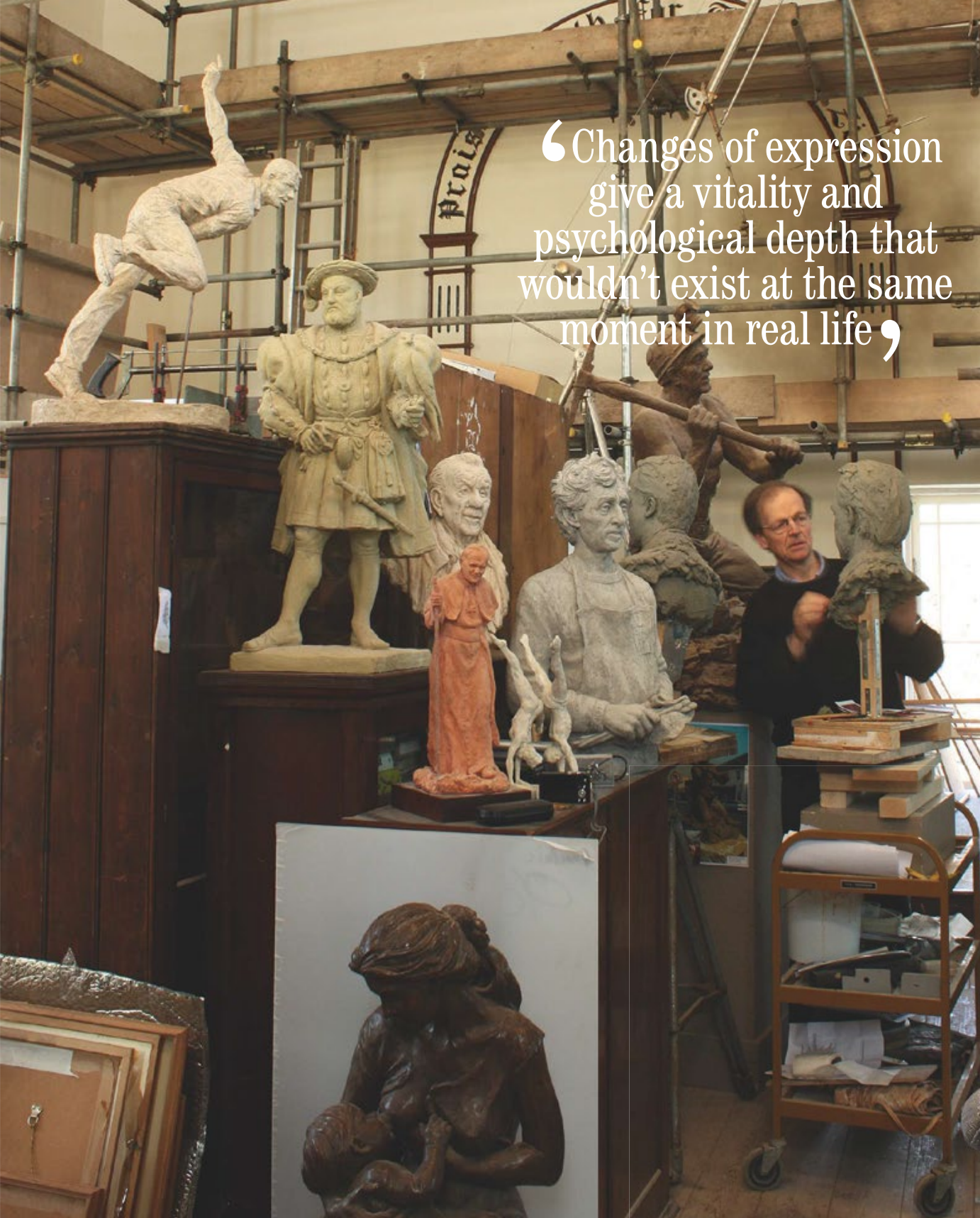
Left: The artist’s daughter Viola

Ideally, Karen likes her subjects to give her 10 sittings. Time allows the sitter to open up. ‘You come across different aspects of their personality. Some people don’t spend so long, however, and it can be less; a lot can be done from photographs and video.’ She once created a portrait bust of Nancy Wake, the White Mouse of the *maquis* during the Second World War, from a few indistinct photographs, using her knowledge of this feisty, life-loving woman—who was, for many years, an institution at the American Bar of the Stafford Hotel, where the bust now sits—to project personality into the image.

Made in three dimensions, sculpture allows a single work to embody a more complex interpretation of a sitter than a painting, which can only show one angle. ‘As you walk around a sculpture and the light changes, the work can suggest different elements of your subject’s character.’

Although Ian Rank-Broadley had known from boyhood that he wanted to be a sculptor, he didn’t find art school any more helpful in developing his passion than Karen did. Welding, in the style of Anthony Caro, was the fashion of the early 1970s, not

‘Changes of expression give a vitality and psychological depth that wouldn’t exist at the same moment in real life’



figures of this kind begin as nudes, before clothes are added.

Since winning the 1997 commission to design the face of The Queen used on the British coinage, Ian has become known for portrait reliefs or medals. These follow the tradition of the medals made by Renaissance rulers and often presented as gifts. Not only do they require fewer sittings (much can be done from photographs), but some owners may find them easier to display at home.

Subjects have included The Prince of Wales, Dr Donald Buttress, former Surveyor of Westminster Abbey—made to commemorate his mastership of the Art Workers Guild—and the architectural historian John Harris.

Antony Dufort isn’t only a sculptor, as the numerous drawings and paintings hung around the walls of his studio, and the etching press in a corner, amply testify, but, in recent years, he has received rather more publicity than he would have wished for one of his portrait sculptures: the figure of Lady Thatcher that stands in the Members’ Lobby of the House of Commons. Inevitably controversial, it was modelled from life; when Antony thanked the former

Left: Antony Dufort in his studio, a former chapel. *Below:* Antony’s monument to the Free Miners

figurative work. After the Slade, however, he won a travel scholarship to Italy, to pursue his love of the Renaissance and Baroque traditions, but he had to quarry other resources to understand how sculpture used to be made.

‘Who taught me?’ he asks rhetorically. ‘He’s been dead 100 years.’ The influence he’s referring to is Edouard Lantéri, whose three books on modelling and sculpting the human and animal form appeared shortly before the First World War.

Ian works from a farmhouse near Stroud, Gloucestershire, a centre, by coincidence, of metal casting, as is Cheltenham. His studio, formed out of an old barn, is an airy space, whose metal shelves are stocked with portrait busts, portrait reliefs and struggling figures, some of them maquettes

for war memorials, such as the two large groups, 14 figures in all, that he made for the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

Another military commission was a silver centrepiece for the Royal Anglian Regiment, in the form of a soldier carrying a gun; particular care had to be taken in modelling the weapon, given the sculpture’s knowledgeable audience. Sadly, his winning design for a memorial at the Château de Hougomont in Belgium, which shows guardsmen in the famous action of closing the gate, was never finished due to shortage of funds.

A recent commission was a lifesize figure of the 15th Lord Lovat in battle-dress, which stands in the memorial garden at Sword Beach as a tribute to the 1st Commando Brigade, which he commanded. In the Lantéri spirit,



Prime Minister for having shown patience as a sitter, she replied wisely: 'It was in my own best interest to do so.'

Antony works in the former Baptist chapel in the Forest of Dean that serves both as family home—living space is provided by the old school-room on the lower-ground floor—and studio in the chapel room above. We climb up a scaffolding to the roof space that he is converting to an eyrie-like office. Among maquettes of ballet dancers, *Bowler* from Lord's Cricket Ground—by good fortune, Antony had an assistant who was a cricketer and could keep the pose of a bowler in the 'follow through position, having just delivered a ball'—and a magnificent Henry VIII (one of a series of Tudors for the Royal Borough of Greenwich, which sadly fell victim to local-authority spending cuts) is a clay head of the art dealer Philip Mould.

‘Sculptors have found, perhaps surprisingly, a new friend in technology’



Above: Antony's clay model of Margaret Thatcher. Left: Ian's Dean Colet memorial



As we walk around it, Antony points to changes of expression that give vitality to the image, as well as psychological depth, but would not exist at the same moment in life. He has a particular attachment to the statue that he made for Ampleforth Abbey of Cardinal Hume, who was his house master at the school there.

Clearly, portrait sculpture isn't just a matter of conveying a likeness, but accuracy can't be ignored. A monument to the Free Miners for the Forest of Dean was modelled from life, down to the nails on the hob-nailed boots, and Antony was glad of the trouble—helped by his model, himself a Free Miner—that he took over the detail. When it was unveiled, an old miner climbed onto the plinth to check that the switch on the miner's lamp was correctly shown in the 'on' position.

Although Free Miners still rely on the strength of their arms and the sharpness of their pickaxes, sculptors have found, perhaps surprisingly, a new friend in technology. Techniques involving laser scanners and 3D printers can save months of labour—and therefore a large sum of money to the client—when enlarging from the maquette. What would Edouard Lantéri have thought of that? 🐦

Further information

Society of Portrait Sculptors 01962 860904; www.portrait-sculpture.org
FACE 2015 is at La Galleria Pall Mall, 30, Royal Opera Arcade, London SW1, from May 18 to 23 (020-7930 8069; www.lagalleria.org)

Karen Newman
www.karen-newman.com
Ian Rank-Broadley
www.ianrank-broadley.co.uk
Antony Dufort
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Collecting time

Huon Mallalieu celebrates one of the greatest private collections of clocks and watches from the golden age of British clock-making. Assembled by the late Tom Scott, it will be dispersed by sale later this year

THOMAS TOMPION seems to be marked as head of his profession by the mere music of his name, as its syllables chime slowly and solemnly upon the ear—so wrote Sir Sacheverell Sitwell (who well understood the euphony of nomenclature) in 1945. Sitwell also understood beauty, quality and craftsmanship, but admitted that the mechanics of clock-making were ‘a mathematical subject beyond our grasp’ and, in this last, he parted company with Tom Scott (1944–2012), owner of probably the largest group of clocks by Tompion (1639–1713) ever assembled, together with many more by his partners, apprentices and rivals during the great period of English clock-making, from 1660 to 1780.

Scott grew up in Nottingham, left school at 15 and joined his father and brother in the motor trade and a nascent crane-hire business. In the beginning, he was hired out as operator with their first crane, but by 1975, the business had prospered so far as to be able to buy the world’s largest telescopic crane. In 1981, the Scotts bought a subsidiary of Taylor Woodrow that had been losing £1 million a year, turned it around within six months and, in 1987, sold it for £75 million.

Scott then moved to the Channel Islands, where he continued his entrepreneurial activities, initially in the car-dealership market, but later becoming the Marks & Spencer and Safeway/Morrisons supermarket franchisee as well as involving himself with Guernsey and Jersey Gas, a football club and a brewery, and



The Lonsdale Tompion. A miniature time-piece with a gilt-brass and blued-steel dial and gilt-brass basket top. It has an alarm and silent pull-quarter repeat. About 1683.

chairing CI Traders. He was also involved in both property investment and development and television. He had an estate in Leicestershire, where he bred pedigree Charolais, and farming interests in Hungary and Ukraine.

Pedigree fowl were another interest.

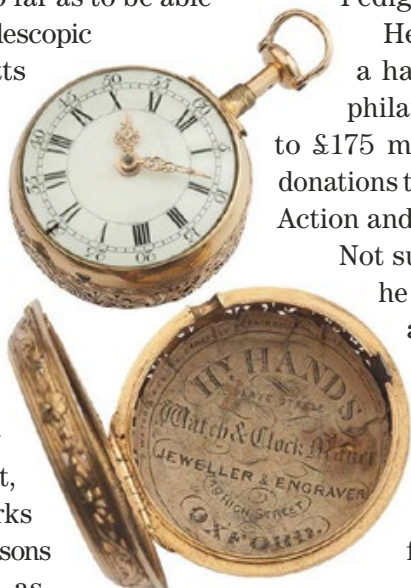
He had a reputation both as a hard-nosed businessman and a philanthropist, and his fortune grew to £175 million, in spite of substantial donations to charities, principally Prostate Action and the Animal Health Trust.

Not surprisingly a collector of cars, he turned his attention to clocks and, also unsurprisingly, he collected them very seriously. He was still acquiring superb examples within a year of his death.

Now, more than 90 items from his collection are being put on the market. Rather than going to auction, they are being marketed through the Winchester clock dealer

Carter Marsh, with highlights first being shown at the Masterpiece Fair at Chelsea Hospital between June 25 and July 1, followed by two selling exhibitions in Winchester, from July 4 to 25 and November 7 to 28. The formula is similar to that used with success by the Fine Art Society to disperse the—unrelated—John Scott Arts-and-Crafts collection over the past year.

Scott bought from dealers and at auction and many of his clocks have appeared in the pages of *COUNTRY LIFE* on previous occasions as they passed through the market. Several articles on them have been written by Richard Garnier, formerly head of Christie’s clock department, who, as a consultant and independent dealer, was often involved in building the Scott Collection. Indeed, as the book he has written with Jonathan Carter—*The Golden Age of English Horology: Masterpieces from the Tom Scott Collection*, published by The Square Press, the publishing company of Carter Marsh—makes clear, he must be credited with building more than just the collection.



Small gold quarter repeating watch in engraved case, about 1735

‘The restoration of the Scott-Cumberland Tompion is a triumph of scholarship and detective work’



Left and right: The Scott-Cumberland Tompion. Now superbly restored, the clock dates from between 1704 and 1708. It has a 13 month duration and a multi-layered, highly complex movement



The identification of the movement for what is now known as the Scott-Cumberland Tompion—important clocks are named for their most eminent owners—its restoration and the creation of a replacement for its long-lost case are triumphs of scholarship and detective work allied to superb craftsmanship.

This clock is also the centrepiece of Mr Garnier’s thesis, expounded in the book, that Queen Anne’s much-denigrated consort, Prince George of Denmark, was not just a drunken buffoon. Charles II famously said ‘I have tried him drunk and I have tried him sober, but there is nothing in him’, William III took pleasure in snubbing him and Queen Victoria believed him to have been ‘very stupid and insignificant’. It is argued that he was, instead, a ‘useful Royal’

in the manner of The Duke of Edinburgh.

Until Queen Anne’s accession, her husband was kept short of money and given virtually no employment; after it, he was denied the title of Prince Consort, let alone King. However, on marriage in 1683, he not only assumed the recently deceased Prince Rupert’s title of Duke of Cumberland, but shared some of his scientific interests, particularly through the Royal Society, and ultimately followed him as Lord High Admiral, head of the navy, taking a closer interest than has often been allowed.

William III had patronised Tompion, who provided him with several of his greatest creations, notably the Mostyn Tompion, now in the British Museum. However, Mr Garnier argues that, on William’s death in 1702, when at last Prince George had access to

funds, he determined to outdo his late brother-in-law. First, he commissioned a year-going longcase clock from Tompion and his then partner Edward Banger, which is distinctly more complex than one made for William. The Scott-Cumberland stands in similar relationship with the Mostyn, generally regarded as Tompion’s masterpiece.

Mr Garnier had posited the existence of such a Cumberland clock, but none was known until the emergence in an American collection of a faceless, caseless movement of great complexity, which could be convincingly attributed to Tompion and which fitted two known cases similar to the Mostyn, one at Burghley, the other in the King of Spain’s study in the royal palace at Madrid; both contained later movements, the latter by George Graham, Tompion’s last partner and successor.



Left: **Ebony-veneered oak architectural eight-day striking spring table clock by Joseph Knibb, about 1670–75.** The drawer might prevent loss of the key



Right: **The Henry Graves Knibb.** A walnut and olivewood longcase with double-six hour *grande sonnerie* strike by Joseph Knibb, about 1680. It is named for an American former owner

Mr Garnier has managed to link the various elements, thanks in part to marks of damage to the movement caused by the snapping of one of the fusee drive-chains. Queen Anne did not share her husband's horological enthusiasm and, after his death in 1708, this clock may well have been demoted from his Kensington Palace bedroom and then cannibalised so that the case could be reused for a diplomatic present to Spain. It is not yet clear how the movement made its way to Burghley, where it was recased, but it probably continued to give trouble there and was once again ejected.

However, Mr Garnier persuaded Scott to acquire it and to fund the ambitious re-creation project. The movement has been treated to a 'museum standard' restoration, meaning that all replacements are reversible. The new case is based on the Spanish one, with decorative elements copied from other Tompions. The results are very impressive indeed.

Tompion, the son of a blacksmith, was born in Northill, Bedfordshire, in 1639, just eight years after the incorporation of the Clockmakers' Company; previously, domestic clock and watchmakers were members of the Blacksmiths' or the Goldsmiths', which may be relevant to Tompion's choice of career.

It is thought that, before he settled in London, he first worked as a journeyman for Ahasuerus Fromanteel (*COUNTRY LIFE*, May 5, 2010), one of the Anglo-Dutch family that launched the great period of English clock-making. When, in 1657, Fromanteel was reproved for employing a 'mere smith', he retorted that his man had served five years in the country making jacks, clocks, guns and locks and could do better work than most of the Company's Court: this was possibly Tompion.

By the end of 1670, he had settled in Water Lane (now Whitefriars Street) off Fleet Street; Joseph Knibb, a clockmaker from Oxford, was nearby and may have introduced his first important patron, the scientist Robert Hooke. There are frequent mentions of Tompion in Hooke's diaries and Hooke not only introduced Tompion to Charles II and into scientific and intellectual circles, but actively helped in design and innovation. In particular, they experimented with watches, and one, whereabouts now unknown, made for the King was inscribed 'Robert Hooke invenit, 1658. T. Tompion fecit, 1675'.

That so many of Scott's clocks were made for the Royal Family but later left royal ownership makes it particularly important and intriguing to trace their provenances.



Left: Oak-cased travelling time-piece, by William Dutton, about 1775



Below: The Hanover Tompion. Turtle-shell and gilt-brass three-train grande sonnerie striking spring clock, about 1704–8. This went from Prince George and Queen Anne to George I and the descendants of his German mistress

‘Thomas Tompion seems to be marked as head of his profession by the mere music of his name’

In some cases, as with the Mostyn, it was a matter of the Lord Chamberlain’s right to take the furnishings of the room in which the reigning sovereign died. Others, as the Scott-Cumberland shows, were diplomatic gifts; still others went to royal mistresses.

The Hanover Tompion, for instance, started in about 1704 and altered or completed after 1708, surfaced in 2003 in an auction of contents from Schloss Wolfsburg near Hanover, seat of the Grafen von der Schulenburg. Their forebear Melusine von der Schulenburg was George I’s mistress, whom he created Duchess of Munster and Kendal.

The inscription on the mezzotint after Tompion’s portrait describes him as ‘Automatopœus’, maker of instruments (Graham has the more prosaic ‘clockmaker’), and the book discusses his innovations and provides an informative catalogue. There is also considerable information on his apprentices and ‘grand-apprentices’, and rivals, such as Daniel Quare (1647/48–1724), the Knibbs and such later followers as William Dutton.

Sitwell’s scholarship may have long been overtaken, but his way with words endures. He concluded his remarks: ‘Tompion is buried, worthily, in Westminster Abbey, from which shrine many more famous, but not greater artists, have been excluded.’ Beside him lies George Graham.

For information on the sale of the Scott Collection, contact Carter Marsh, 32A The Square, Winchester SO23 9EX (www.marshclocks.co.uk; 01962 844443)





FOR one of the first times in my life as a cookery writer, this glorious month of May shall be bereft of a single recipe for asparagus, for I have been shamed by my fellow Englishmen and women.

This time last year, in the glorious Surrey countryside, I witnessed, over and over again, the antics of previous visitors kindly invited to pick their own farm asparagus (after a modest fee) who, it seems, had turned primitive when it came to one of the most joyous tasks of the culinary field.

‘I have been shamed by my fellow Englishmen and women’

What so horrified me as I meandered up and down the raised beds, quietly harvesting my bounty, was that at least a quarter of these beautiful green spears, standing so proud and just begging to be sliced out of the ground with a long, sharp knife, had then simply been discarded upon the soil. The perversity of such sacrilege left me more depressed than I can recently recall, as I motored back to west London.

Naturally, I suggest that readers of COUNTRY LIFE will wholeheartedly agree with my distress over such behaviour and understand my reluctance to, once again, display enthusiasm for this seasonal delight. Let us hope that my outrage conveyed to the growers, last year, may now have corrected the situation and allow me to wax lyrical once more next year.

In the meantime, I hope that the following two offerings will appease; at least the lamb is as seasonal as can be and, together with the vibrantly flavoured squid salad, will hopefully provide a first and main course that could not be more fresh tasting for, say, a late-spring weekend lunch.

Jason Lowe

A taste of spring

The freshest of ingredients can add something unexpected to a simple seasonal lunch, advises Simon Hopkinson



Tender and delicious: this poached lamb is a welcome change

Poached neck fillet of lamb with spinach and egg and lemon sauce

Serves 4

The simple soup known as *avgolemono* is made when a flavour-some chicken broth, lemon juice and rice are lightly emulsified by the quick addition of beaten eggs (or sometimes just yolks) whisked into it, both thickening and enriching the assembly. The following preparation using lamb employs a similar method, producing a delicate, yet deeply savoury dish.

Note: boned and rolled lamb breast is now a regular feature in supermarkets, but if your butcher has whole lamb breasts,

simply ask him to chop them into pieces, bones and all, but kindly request that he also removes most of the excess fat.

Ingredients

For the lamb cooking broth
300g boned lamb breast (or another cheap cut), chopped into small pieces
200ml dry white wine
3 celery stalks, chopped
3 cloves garlic, bruised
2 small onions, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
A little salt

4 small lamb neck fillets
Juice of 2 small lemons
4 egg yolks, beaten
100ml double cream

About 3 handfuls of small, young spinach leaves
Freshly ground white pepper

Method

Put the ingredients for the broth into a roomy pot and add about one litre of cold water. Slowly bring up to a simmer and skim off all resultant scum that appears on the surface. Allow to quietly cook for about one hour. Now, immerse the lamb fillets and poach for no more than 20 minutes or so. Lift them out, place upon a warmed dish and secure with foil. Strain the broth through a fine sieve into a clean pan (discard all solids), allow to settle for a few minutes and then remove the fat from the surface using a few sheets of kitchen paper.

Reduce the broth by about half (once more, removing any scum generated) until strong in flavour. Immerse the lamb fillets, bring up to a very gentle simmer and poach for 10–15 minutes; they should feel bouncy when tweaked between the fingers, once cooked. Remove the lamb fillets to a plate, cover tightly with foil and put to one side.

Stir the lemon juice into the broth and keep hot. Now, put the egg yolks in a bowl and whisk in the cream. Slowly add this to the broth while whisking energetically over a low heat until the mixture is clearly beginning to thicken up; this will not take very long. Once the consistency is beginning to resemble that of double cream (watch out that the sauce doesn't scramble and split), adjust seasoning and add the spinach. Allow to wilt into the sauce and then put the pan to one side.

Slice the lamb onto hot plates and spoon the sauce over it allowing the spinach to settle to one side, almost as a garnish. Eat with buttered new potatoes.



Light fantastic: the key to this pretty, fresh, Asian-inspired spring salad is cooking the squid for a few minutes only

Squid salad

Serves 4

Try to find squid as fresh as possible—and, furthermore, not too large. I have always found it unnecessary to remove the purplish skin that covers the body of the squid and think it rather attractive, once cooked, as well as preserving flavour, I believe.

Do please be attentive to the instructions below for cooking the squid: truly, the timing should almost be seconds and certainly not more than a couple of minutes.

Ingredients

For the dressing

200ml *mirin* (sweet rice wine)

50ml light soy sauce

Half a tablespoon Thai fish sauce

Juice of 1 lime

1 small knob fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated

1 clove garlic, finely chopped

1tbspn sesame oil

2 red chillies, de-seeded and finely chopped

350g–400g cleaned squid

Half a large cucumber, peeled and sliced

2 hot green chillies, thinly sliced

Coriander leaves

4 spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped

Method

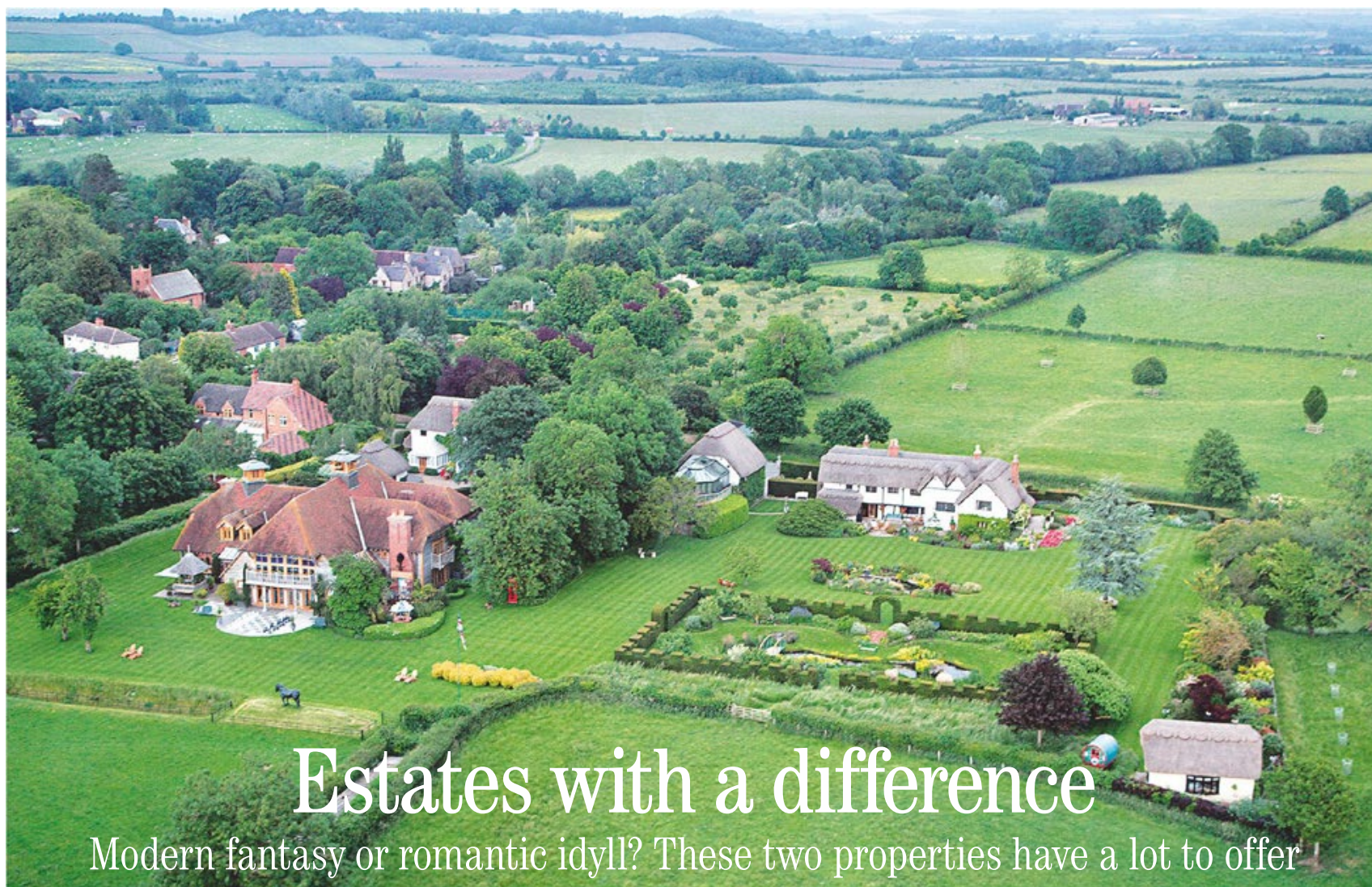
To make the dressing, pour the *mirin* into a small saucepan, bring up to the boil, then simmer until reduced to about two-thirds of its original volume. Decant into a bowl and allow to cool completely. Add the remaining seven ingredients and stir together. Put to one side.

Bring a pot of lightly salted water to the boil. Cut the squid bodies into thin rings and cut

the clutch of tentacles into single lengths. Plunge into the water, just bring back to the boil and then drain at once.

Take four plates and divide the cucumber, chillies, coriander and spring onions between them. Arrange them prettily before carefully placing pieces of the squid on top, making sure that each has both rings and tentacles. Whisk the dressing, spoon some over each salad and serve forthwith.

Simon Hopkinson is the founding chef and co-proprietor of Bibendum restaurant, London



Estates with a difference

Modern fantasy or romantic idyll? These two properties have a lot to offer

THE challenges of life in the English countryside are highlighted by the sale of two very different estates—one the fantasy creation of a restless 20th-century genius, the other a diverse, 290-acre estate dating back more than 1,000 years and centred on the partly restored ruin of a Grade I-listed mansion that was once the grandest house on the Isle of Wight.

Joint selling agents Smiths Gore (01451 832832) and Knight Frank (01789 297735) have been inundated with calls from potential purchasers following the announcement of the sale of an intriguing portfolio of properties amassed by the late Felix Dennis in and around the village of Dorsington, Warwickshire, between 1987, when he moved to The Old Manor, and his death there in June last year.

The properties—including the manor itself, a spectacular leisure complex, a Georgian farmhouse, various village and estate houses and a number of sites for development or conversion—are being offered in up to 11 lots, at prices ranging from £300,000 for a semi-detached, two-bedroom cottage to £9.515 million for the entire estate. Additional land is available with some



of the lots by separate negotiation.

Dennis had a passion for trees and the proceeds of the sale will go to the Heart of England Forest, a charitable trust set up to re-create Shakespeare's Forest of Arden on 5,750 acres of land acquired around The Old Manor over the years. The former 'wild man' of publishing, for whom extreme living was the norm, was totally committed to the project and planted the millionth tree there in September 2013.

He originally bought The Old Manor as a retreat from his manic life in London, but came to love it so much that it became his permanent home. Dennis loved to entertain, but didn't really want guests staying in his house, so he gradually bought up neighbouring houses and developed them into Caribbean-style guest cottages. The thatched, Elizabethan, four-bed-



Felix Dennis's The Old Manor estate at Dorsington in Warwickshire (above) is being offered in up to 11 lots at £9.515 million for the entire estate. It includes the thatched main house (above right, £1.75m) and Highfield (above left, £2.45m), the ultimate party barn

room main house, listed Grade II, dates from the early 16th century and was originally five workers' cottages. Priced at £1.75m, it stands in about nine acres of gardens, grounds and paddocks, with glorious unfettered views over the Warwickshire countryside towards Meon Hill and the Ilmington Downs.

Dennis's *pièce de résistance* was Highfield, a bungalow that he transformed into the ultimate party barn at a cost of almost £5m and which, at the time of its construction, was the biggest barn to be built of green oak in England for 300 years. Themed on the storyline of *Treasure Island*, his childhood favourite, the 12,000sq ft complex boasts a vast aquarium full of tropical fish, a swimming pool with an island planted with full-size palm trees and pirates climbing the

rigging as well as other eccentricities, including a working red telephone box, an outdoor Caribbean bar and a full-size chessboard in the garden. It comes with planning consent for conversion to residential use and is on offer at a realistic £2.45m.

A substantial building of interest to lovers of Georgian architecture is handsome Manor House Farmhouse, listed Grade II, which stands in 1.2 acres of gardens on the edge of the village and has three reception rooms, a kitchen/breakfast room, five first-floor bedrooms, four attic bedrooms and two bath/shower rooms. It has been used as a holiday let and needs refurbishing, but has the potential to create a 'truly lovely house', says Robert Pritchard of Smiths Gore, who quotes a guide price of £875,000.

‘The barn boasts an island with full-size palm trees’

Potential abounds within the historic confines of the 290-acre Appuldurcombe estate between the villages of Wroxall and Godshill, near Ventnor, Isle of Wight, much of it already realised by the current owners, who have lived at Appuldurcombe for 30 years and are now retiring.

For sale through the Winchester office of Savills (01962 841842) at a guide price of £6m for the whole,

The 290-acre Appuldurcombe estate on the Isle of Wight includes the romantic ruins of Appuldurcombe House (above). Its East Wing has been re-roofed and partially restored (right) and is a popular wedding venue



or in four lots, the diverse working estate, which dates from before the Norman Conquest, currently comprises two farmhouses, seven holiday cottages, a working aviary, a cafe, a children's indoor soft play area and the romantic ruins of Appuldurcombe House.

The magnificent Baroque mansion, listed Grade I, designed by the architect John James and set within a Cap-

ability Brown landscape, was rebuilt in 1701 on the site of an earlier Tudor house by Sir Robert Worsley, whose family owned the estate for 300 years. The house was substantially altered and extended some 70 years later by Sir Robert's profligate great-nephew, Sir Richard Worsley, whose disastrous marriage to, and subsequent divorce from his wife, Seymour Fleming (whom he reputedly married 'for love and £80,000'), are set to feature in a BBC2 drama, *The Lady in Red*, later this year.

Their scandalous divorce case cost Sir Richard his reputation, and the Worsleys their family fortune, and when Sir Richard died in 1805, Appuldurcombe passed to his niece's husband, Charles Anderson-Pelham, 1st Earl of Yarborough, the founder of the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes.

The estate was eventually sold in 1855 and Appuldurcombe House was run, first as a hotel, then a boys' school, and later a temporary refuge for exiled French Benedictine monks. Used as a billet for troops during both World Wars, the house was badly damaged in the Second World War, when a German Dornier dropped its last mine close to the house before crashing into the nearby hillside.

Although still mainly a shell, the East Wing has been partly restored and re-roofed, and now serves as a popular wedding venue throughout the year. Other estate buildings have been converted or restored as holiday lets, including The Gatehouse, The Retreat (a one-bedroom cottage), Stable Cottage (the former stables) and The Coach House, all listed Grade II.



Quintessential Arts-and-Crafts

LAUNCHED on the market in this week's COUNTRY LIFE, charming, Grade II-listed Kingcombe at Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, one of the loveliest market towns in the Cotswolds, was built in 1925 in the Arts-and-Crafts style for the furniture designer Sir Gordon Russell. Kingcombe became Sir Gordon's passion and gradually evolved into

a substantial seven-bedroom country house with a notable garden laid out by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe and Russell Page. Both house and garden have been meticulously restored to their original splendour during the 17-year tenure of the present owner, who has already embarked on the construction of a major neo-Georgian country house, hence the sale of Kingcombe through Smiths Gore (01451 832832) at a guide price of £4.25m.



Boys and girls come out to play

Building a playhouse in the garden will both captivate children's imaginations and get them outdoors. Arabella Youens finds out what's on the market

WHEN we celebrated The Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, the BBC produced a documentary of Princess Beatrice showing journalist Andrew Marr around Y Bwthyn Bach—or The Little House—the miniature cottage in the grounds of Windsor's Royal Lodge that was presented to Princess Elizabeth for her sixth birthday on behalf of the people of Wales. At the time, Princess Beatrice had been charged with redecorating the house so it was ready for the next generation—The Queen's ever-increasing number of great-grandchildren—to enjoy.

Judging by business at three leading playhouse companies, the appetite for building wendy or treehouse structures in gardens is voracious—particularly, according to the directors of The Playhouse Company (01544 387100; www.theplayhousecompany.co.uk), from grandparents seeking to entertain (or establish a strong enough draw for) visiting grandchildren.

The Herefordshire-based outfit was commissioned by one couple last year to create a playhouse with a difference for their three grandchildren, with the proviso that it had to fit around a 200-year-old oak tree. The result is a series of platforms, covered stages, a tunnelled walkway and a rope bridge that runs along the existing border of the garden.

'It's about enticing children away from their televisions and computer consoles and getting them into the great outdoors, using their imaginations and creativity,' explains director Richard Frost.

The concept of the playhouse has evolved from the miniature cottage via more extravagant princess castles to even an entire 'pirate island' built on a lake in Cambridgeshire, complete with a 'raider's raft' or pirate boat featuring a Yamaha outboard motor. According to Sege Rosella of The Master Wishmakers (01536 525552; www.masterwishmakers.com), the only limit to what his company will build is science (and, of course, funds).

'Our service is completely bespoke—if you want a miniature version of your 300-year-old Georgian mansion, complete with a replica of Great-Aunt Joyce's



From little acorns: a couple in Herefordshire's vision for this spectacular playhouse and equipment for their grandchildren, built around a 200-year-old oak tree, was brought to life by The Playhouse Company

table in the dining room, we can do it,' says Mr Rosella. The company, which makes everything by hand in its Northamptonshire workshop, will take care of every element, starting with architectural drawings through to gaining planning permission where required and installing the finished product.

'Generally, a customer will come to us and we'll think together about what their children or grandchildren are interested in and then we'll have fun creating some ideas,' explains Mr Rosella. So far, these have included an American-style drive-through diner and an aircraft-hanger bedroom. 'We have to imagine ourselves as children again, which isn't tricky as we're all quite playful in the office,' he adds.

Sally Stone and Alex Watkins operate Stone & Watkins Playhouses (01363 772879; www.play-houses.com) in mid Devon. The company's replica Queen Anne manor house drew the crowds (as well as commentary in *COUNTRY LIFE*) when it was first unveiled at the Chelsea Flower Show in 1999. There is a range of playhouse and treehouse

designs to choose from, but, as everything is made to order, they can be adapted to accommodate awkward spaces or existing trees.

Mr Watkins recommends people have an eye on the future. 'Younger children will love a simple playhouse, but, by the time a child is four, they might want something more adventurous, with a slide or a swing.' Later still, it's worth thinking about installing a platform or raising the playhouse. 'I think it's a fundamental part of being a child to want a place that's yours higher up. When you're a kid, everywhere belongs to grown-ups, but a treehouse or platform can be a sanctuary solely for children.'

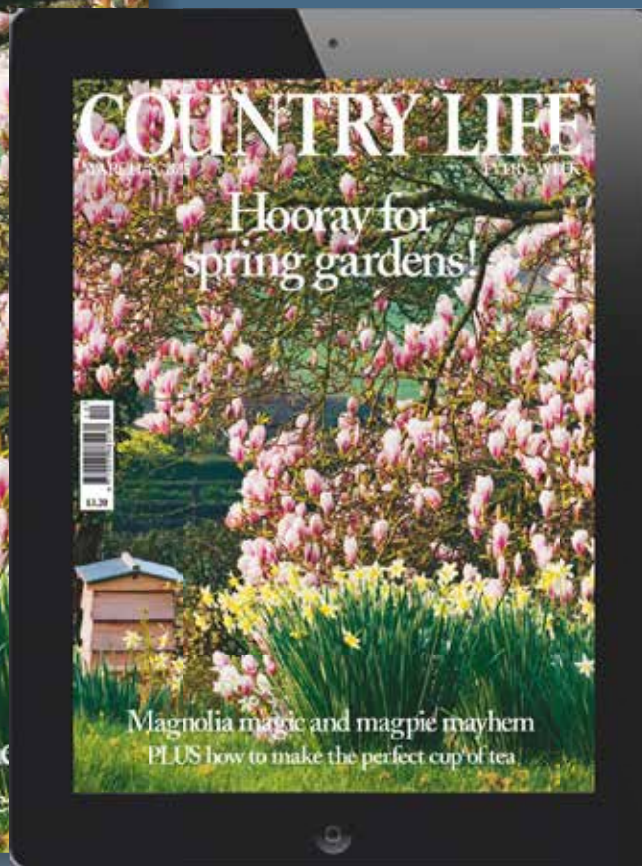
Prices for playhouses, not unlike the grown-up version, range widely. You can buy something on a smaller scale off the shelf from John Lewis for about £250 and the sky is seemingly limitless for something conjured up by The Master Wishmakers. Stone & Watkins Playhouses quotes £3,765 as a starting price for one of its cottages, but the Queen Anne replica will set you back £24,495.

Last weekend, at Badminton Horse Trials, The Playhouse Company launched the latest model in its collection, which is more modest in both structure and price. The Gypsy Caravan has a stable door to the front, two single windows on one side plus another window at the back and costs £1,750 (including delivery). 🐾

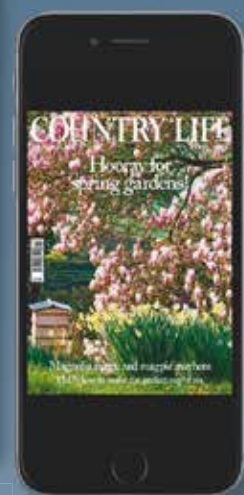
Michael Hanson, who was the *COUNTRY LIFE* property correspondent for 27 years, died last month at the age of 78. He was awarded Property Journalist of the Year five times between 1976 and 1995. An admirer of Lutyens, he was writing a book on the architect at the time of his death.

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Ipswich commute

Suffolk, £1.45 million

Chattisham Hall, Chattisham

6 bedrooms, annexe studio, 8 acres

Jackson-Stops & Staff (01473 218218)

This pretty Georgian house stands on the edge of the village with far-reaching views. It's been in the same family for a number of years, so the incoming buyer would most likely want to update the interiors, but it has lots of potential, with a series of handsome reception rooms and good-sized bedrooms.



On the edge of Savernake Forest

Wiltshire, £1.85 million

Durley Gate, Savernake

5 bedrooms, stable block, 5.9 acres

Knight Frank (01488 682726)

Originally a pair of cottages, the house was sold out of the Savernake estate in the 1970s. It has a large kitchen/breakfast room (with an Aga) and stands in an AONB, just two miles from the shop and mainline station at Great Bedwyn. Marlborough College and St John's academy are within an easy distance.

Gorgeous gardens



Northamptonshire, £995,000

The Old Rectory, Woodford

Carter Jonas (01604 608200)

Overlooking the Nene valley and river, this Grade II-listed house stands in magnificent landscaped gardens. There are three reception rooms, a good-sized kitchen and a cellar.



Gloucestershire, £895,000

3 The Manor, Mickleton

Smiths Gore (01451 832832)

This farmhouse forms part of Mickleton Manor, which was converted into four properties in the 1980s. It has five bedrooms, two reception rooms, a private terrace and communal gardens.



Essex, £1.795 million

The Old Vicarage, Broxted

Cheffins (01799 523656)

Standing in 10.6 acres and enjoying a beautiful garden, which also has an outdoor swimming pool, this five-bedroom house comes with a large reception hall, two reception rooms, a kitchen with an Aga and a separate breakfast room.

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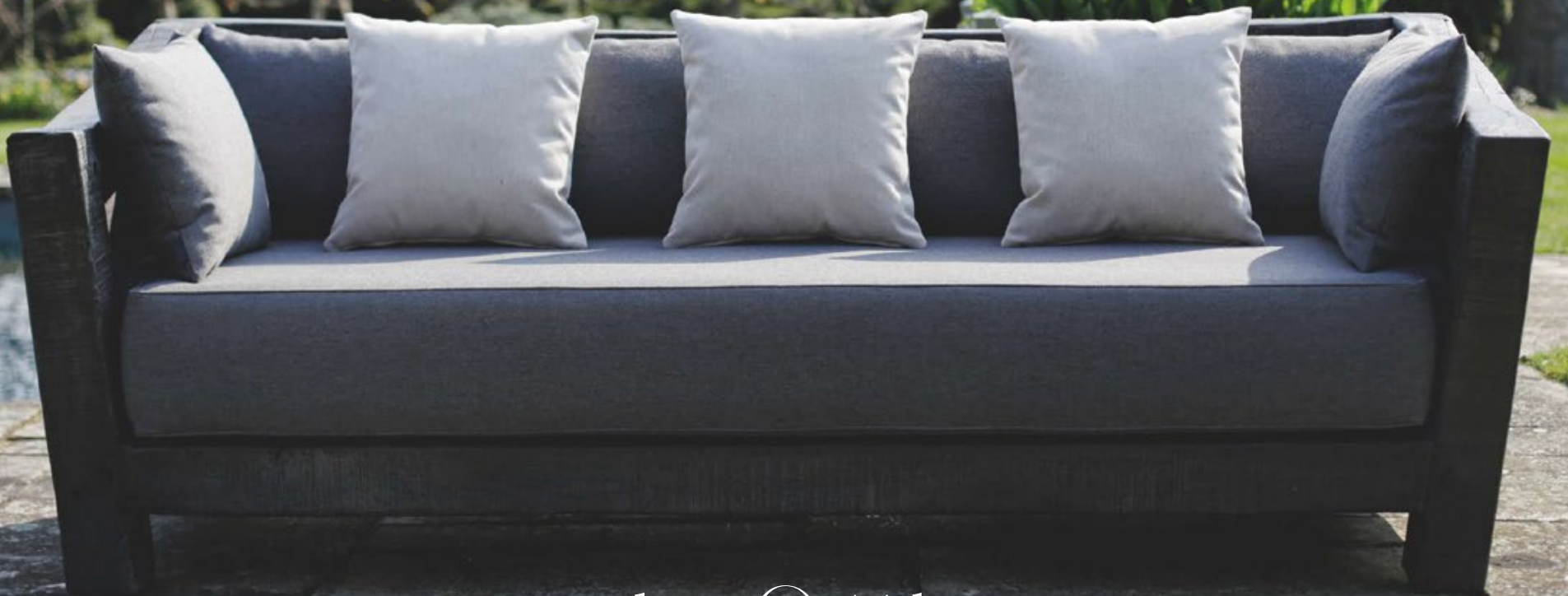
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A royal cornucopia

George Plumptre marvels at the breadth of artworks in the Royal Collection that celebrate gardens and gardening

THE last major exhibition celebrating gardens in art was 'The Glory of the Garden' at Sotheby's in 1987. The Queen generously lent to that show, but, as is confirmed by this beautifully crafted new exhibition, she clearly kept the best at home.

'Painting Paradise' again celebrates the vibrant relationship between gardens and art, but does so drawing only on the Royal Collection. Early notices have focused on the light the exhibition sheds on the history of gardens and their representation in art, but the most fascinating light it sheds is on the Royal Collection, as a repository of superlative quality and diversity.

The exhibition doesn't just tell the story of gardens through history. Instead, it presents



Landseer's *Windsor Castle in modern times* showing George IV's parterres on the East Terrace

‘A kaleidoscope of riches is presented to dazzling effect, from Persian miniatures to Edwardian grandeur,’

a kaleidoscope of riches to dazzling effect, from early Persian miniatures, sweeping through the Italian Renaissance into wider Europe and the Baroque, on to the Landscape Movement and then to the collecting delights of the Victorian age and Edwardian grandeur.

It reveals as much about connoisseurship, and about the particular loves of different members of the Royal Family, as it does about art. It reminds us that they have commissioned both as monarchs, to reflect and enhance their status and power, and as private individuals, to indulge their personal loves. You discover that William IV may not have been a great art collector, but he was a bibliophile and a number of the pre-eminent books on show were acquired by him.

No single item resonates with the projection of royal authority and succession more than the majestic *The Family of Henry VIII* (about 1545), with its views to the gardens of Whitehall Palace. Quite different in emphasis and style is Sir Edwin Landseer's *Windsor Castle in*

modern times: Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and Victoria, Princess Royal, which shows the Royal Family in a scene of domestic bliss. It, too, has a view out to Windsor Castle's garden beyond as a key feature.

Research for the exhibition threw up some major discoveries, the most thrilling of which for the curator, Vanessa Remington, was confirmation that the 1523 *Portrait of Jacopo Cennini*, by the Florentine painter called Franciabigio, is the earliest known portrait of a professional gardener. This mesmerising work, for me the star of the show, has all the humanity of other great early Italian portraits and the sitter's profession is confirmed by the gardening implements hanging behind him.

There is only space here to mention a few highlights. The first room is a treasure trove—where else would you find two drawings by Leonardo da Vinci and another exquisite unnamed 16th-century Italian work, etchings by Dürer, two early Dutch masterpieces and a breathtaking depiction of Christ as a gardener by Rembrandt?

Royal Collection Trust/Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014

A gift from Prince Albert: Queen Victoria's Orange blossom parure in gold, porcelain, enamel and velvet, consisting of a head wreath, brooches and earrings





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Exhibition 'Painting Paradise' at The Queen's Gallery, London

There is plenty of bravura, not least in the Baroque period, and most gloriously in the oak-and-silver table made for William III to designs by his gardener William Marot, with a pineapple as the centrepiece of its stretcher. William III was competing with the French king, Louis XIV, whose gardens at Marly and Versailles are depicted in two sumptuous views by Jean-Baptiste Martin, dated about 1700.

Other paintings are important records because they show views that no longer exist, such as Danckerts' view of the old Elizabethan façade at Hampton Court that was swept away by Sir Christopher Wren and, one of my favourites, the early-18th-century view of the working kitchen garden beneath the north wall of Windsor Castle.

I was intrigued by the Fabergé creation of a convolvulus that once belonged to Vita Sackville-



A sumptuous scene: *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden* (1615) by Jan Bruegel the Elder



Seven Couples in a Garden (about 1510) by Mir 'Ali Sir Nava'i

West, and who could resist the miniature wheelbarrow and rake that belonged to one of Queen Victoria's children (they each had their own sets of tools, specially labelled, to prevent squabbles)?

With a personal interest in Edward VII, I enjoyed the Cyril Ward view of the gardens at Sandringham, in which the King took such pride. He poured the earnings of his great Derby-winning racehorse Persimmon into their creation and, when showing off the majestic range of teak glasshouses that stretched for 300 yards along one garden wall, he would proudly announce to visitors: 'All Persimmon, All Persimmon!'

The different rooms of the exhibition are themed through well-known periods of garden history, but 'Painting Paradise' doesn't really need these signposts—you will find yourself wandering at will and returning to favourites. If I have a criticism, it's the quantity of etchings and engravings that are included: historically important, but not visually dazzling, a quality for which 'Painting Paradise' sets high standards.

The exhibition has clearly been put together by someone with a great affection for gardens and gardeners. In her conversation with me, Mrs Remington gave a delightfully personal insight: 'My first childhood memory was of selling tickets with my grandparents when they opened their garden in Highgate in aid of the National Gardens Scheme [NGS].'

I left feeling replete and happy that the NGS might have sown an early seed in the conception of this truly royal show, whose appeal will reach far beyond gallery buffs and gardening aficionados.

George Plumtre is Chief Executive of the National Gardens Scheme. 'Painting Paradise: The Art of the Garden' is at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, London SW1 until October 11 (020-7766 7300; www.royalcollection.org.uk). The accompanying book by Vanessa Remington, with a foreword by Sir Roy Strong, is published by the Royal Collection Trust (£29.95)

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Can't get you out of my head: Kasper Holten's astonishing set for the Royal Opera's *Król Roger* really brings this rarity to life

Season of love

The excitements of spring have whetted our appetite for the musical riches of summer, says Geoffrey Smith

A BOMBSHELL election, a blissful addition to the Royal Family—this has been a spring like no other, a torrent of incident and expectation. But amid all the excitement, music has held its own, a counterpoint of emotion and pleasure, providing a respite from the media surge and experience of particular distinction. For instance, those of us lucky enough to be part of a packed Royal Festival Hall will never

Bill Cooper

forget Martha Argerich's supernal performance of Beethoven's *First Piano Concerto*, with Daniel Barenboim conducting the Staatskapelle Berlin. It made an electrifying opening to this year's 'Barenboim Project', which continues from May 27 to June 2 with the maestro exchanging the podium for the keyboard, performing all of Schubert's piano sonatas over four concerts (0844 875 0073; www.southbankcentre.co.uk).

And there is more pianistic and orchestral quality, on May 20, when Maria João Pires joins the Budapest Festival Orchestra (BFO) and Iván Fisher in Mozart's *Piano Concerto No 9*. Known for their supple elegance, Maestro Fisher and the BFO conclude the evening with Brahms's *Symphony No 1*. On June 5–6, devotees of symphonic sonority will relish the legendary opulence of the Philadelphia Orchestra, as Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts programmes of Shostakovich, Rachmaninov, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, featuring violinist Lisa Batiashvili and pianist Emmanuel Ax.

Across the Thames, the Barbican offers similar plenty (020-7638 8891; www.barbican.org.uk). On May 24, the London Symphony Orchestra, under Daniel Harding, continues its

International Violin Festival with Christian Tetzlaff in Beethoven and Dorothea Röschmann and Matthias Goerne are the vocal soloists in Brahms's *German Requiem*. Mr Goerne and his distinguished accompanist Piotr Anderszewski perform Schumann *lieder* on the 28th.

On June 5, Murray Perahia, one of the world's best-loved pianists, plays Haydn, Beethoven, Franck and Chopin and, on the 6th, the Britten Sinfonia presents a remarkable world premiere: *Sentences*, a dramatic monologue based on the troubled life of computer pioneer Alan Turing, composed and conducted by Nico Muhly, starring counter-tenor Iestyn Davies, who also sings Dowland and Vivaldi.

Covent Garden is blazing a new operatic trail as well, with its first-ever production of ➤

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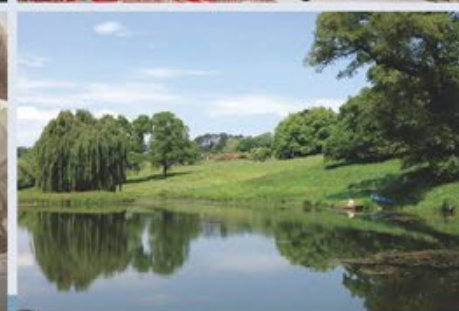
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COUNTRY LIFE



Stéphanie d'Oustrac will take the title role in Glyndebourne's revival of David McVicar's 2002 production of *Carmen*

Szymanowski's mesmerising *Król Roger* (020-7304 4000; www.roh.org.uk). Evoking the sound worlds of Wagner and Debussy, its voluptuous score brings out the best in Sir Antonio Pappano, the Royal Opera orchestra and its star cast.

Mariusz Kwiecien is the eponymous king, torn between traditional control and the seductive allure of Saimir Pirgu's mysterious Shepherd, who preaches sensual abandon and threatens to undermine Roger's authority, as he has already enticed Georgia Jarman's Queen Roxana.

Kasper Holten's striking production features a massive skull, dominating the stage and becoming a three-tiered set in itself, symbolising the king's mental turmoil. Intense and powerful, this intriguing rarity runs until May 19.

From May 18 to July 4, the Royal Opera revives Richard Eyre's classic production of Verdi's *La traviata*, with a double cast headed by sopranos Sonya Yon-

cheva and Marina Rebeka, and Plácido Domingo appearing as Giorgio Germont on May 28 and June 3. And another classic staging has its swan song from May 23 to July 16, with the farewell revival of John Copley's evergreen version of Puccini's *La bohème*. Going out in appropriate style, its double cast includes diva Anna Netrebko and star tenors Joseph Calleja and Piotr Beczala, with a live screen relay on June 10.

But, despite Covent Garden's stardust and grandeur, I'm drawn at the moment to its cheeky cousin in St Martin's Lane (020-7845 9300; www.eno.org). As I write, ENO is preparing to launch Mike Leigh's much-anticipated staging of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*.

Although Mr Leigh insists he just wants to 'produce the goods and go back to the day job' of film, his qualifications as a G&S devotee and top-notch director promise something special, especially with the likes of Andrew Shore as Major-General Stanley and Jonathan Lemalu, the Sergeant of Police. The show runs until July 4, with a live screening on May 19.

And, subsequently, although I'm less keen on ENO's revival of Bizet's *Carmen* (see *Give This a Miss*), I'm very much looking forward to its new production of Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades*, from June 6 until July 2. Directed by David Alden, it marks Edward Gardner's final performance as ENO's



Yannick Nézet-Séguin will lead the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall

Robbie Jack/Corbis Images; Chris Christodoulou/Lebrecht Music and Arts/Corbis Images; Marco Borggreve

What's new

At this year's **Aldeburgh Festival**, music's three Bs are Harrison Birtwistle, Pierre Boulez and George Benjamin. Opening on June 12 with a pair of Birtwistle one-act operas, *The Corridor* and *The Cure* (in its world premiere), the two-week programme showcases a retrospective portrait of Mr Boulez for his 90th birthday, combining theatre, film and live performance, and Mr Benjamin appears as conductor and pianist in several concerts, including his own works. Historic Bs are honoured as well, with John Eliot Gardiner and pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard performing Bach and ample representation of Aldeburgh's founder, Benjamin Britten. Indeed, the festival concludes with excerpts from Britten's ballet *The Prince of the Pagodas*, conducted by Oliver Knussen on June 28 (01728 687110; www.aldeburgh.co.uk)

Book now

Harry Christophers' elite ensemble **The Sixteen** has set off on its latest Choral Pilgrimage, bringing Spain's Golden Age to Greenwich, Exeter, Truro and Llandaff from May 20 to 23 and across Britain until October 24 (01904 658338; www.ncem.co.uk/thesixteen)

Opera North revives its hit production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's Broadway classic *Carousel*, in Leeds from May 13 to 23, then visiting Norwich from May 28 to 30 and Edinburgh from June 2 to 6 (0113-243 9999; www.operanorth.co.uk)

In the heart of East Sussex, **Wardsbrook Concerts** presents star British singers in a magnificent Tudor barn, with lunch and wine. Alice Coote appears on June 14 and Christopher Maltman on June 27, with all proceeds to St Michael's Hospice in Hastings (www.wardsbrookeconcerts.org.uk)

Last chance to see

Based at St John's Smith Square, from May 15 to 19, the **London Festival of Baroque Music** presents such eminent artists as the Bach Collegium Japan, with Masaaki Suzuki (right), as well as soprano Carolyn Sampson (020-7222 1061; www.sjss.org.uk)



Give this a miss

I'm not a fan of ENO's nasty, sleazy update of Bizet's *Carmen*, in which a clapped-out car stands in for a gypsy tavern. But some approve and the singing may be fine. *May 20-July 3* (020-7845 9300; www.eno.org)

Music Director. As always, he will be terrific, conducting a cast including Felicity Palmer as The Countess.

However, as spring's green deepens into summer, operatic attention inevitably turns from town to country. On May 21, Glyndebourne bursts into glorious life with its inaugural

production of Donizetti's *Poliuto*, until July 15, and a revival of *Carmen*, May 23-July 11 (01273 815000; www.glyndebourne.com).

But the full Glyndebourne schedule, plus the riches of the country-house opera season as a whole, will receive specific consideration in these pages on May 27. 🐦

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Oh! What a lovely Wartski

From war-torn Poland to London's Mayfair, a new book charts the success of one of the world's greatest jewellers in its 150th year

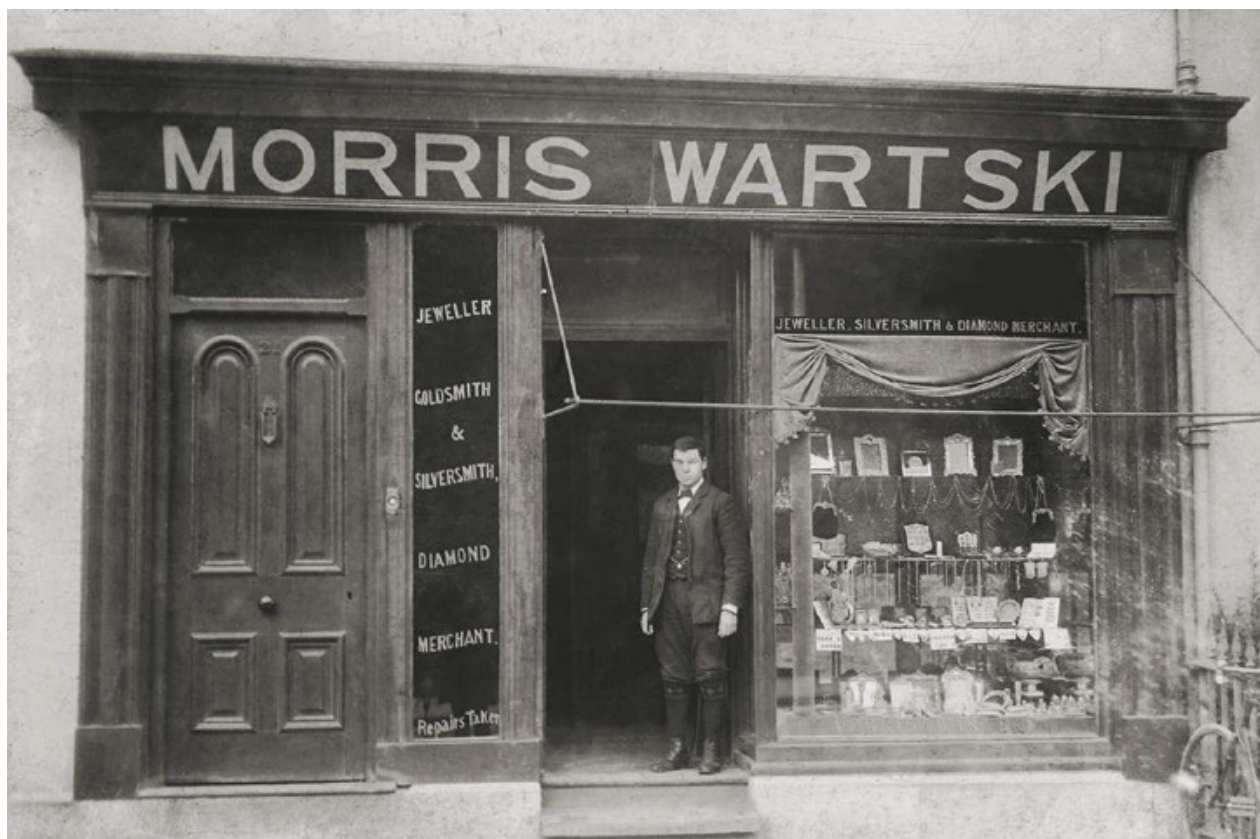


Fig 1 left: Morris Wartski outside his first shop in Bangor (about 1895). Fig 2 above: British actress Jessie Matthews was a regular and extravagant Wartski customer

This week, I am taking a temporary diversion from the usual pattern of these pages, in order to look at a sumptuous book that whirls us through the 150-year history of one of the world's great jewellery businesses.

According to family tradition, the business that grew to be Wartski, the Mayfair jeweller by appointment to The Queen and The Prince of Wales, had its beginnings in 1865, in Turek in Poland, then close to the border between Russia and Prussia. It was not a good time for anyone, let alone a Jew, to set up business offering jewellery and haberdashery in Poland, as a nationalist uprising against the Russian occupiers had just been bloodily crushed and, throughout the Tsarist Empire, anti-semitism was on the rise.

It is not surprising that in, or a little before, 1876, Shemaya and Rosa Wartski, despite declaring themselves 'natural-born subjects of the Russian Empire', should send three of their sons, among them the 21-year-old Morris,

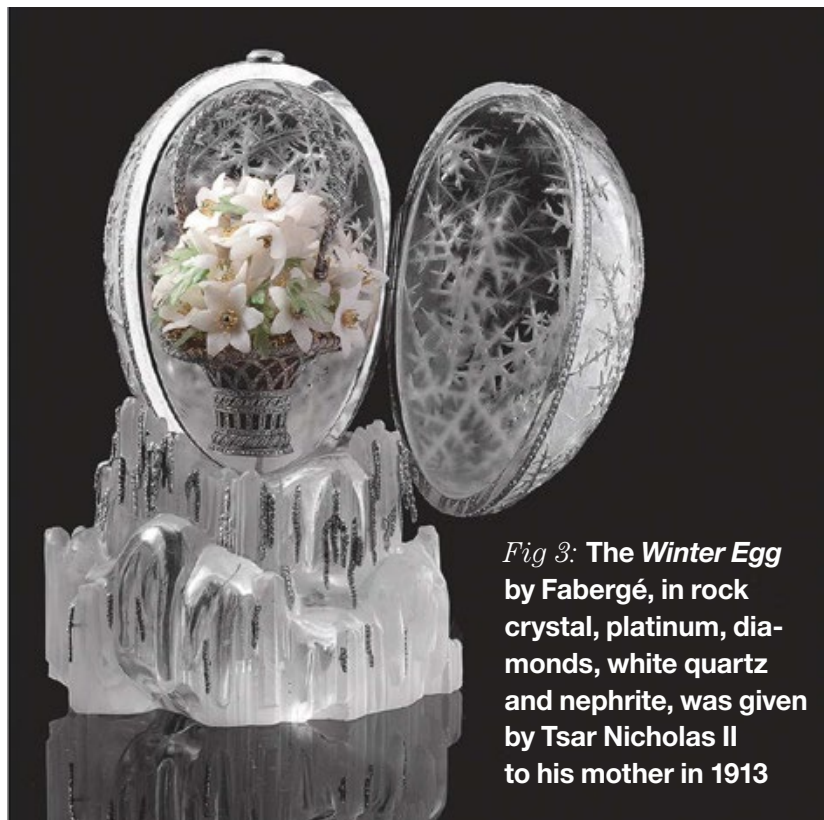


Fig 3: The Winter Egg by Fabergé, in rock crystal, platinum, diamonds, white quartz and nephrite, was given by Tsar Nicholas II to his mother in 1913

westwards to Britain. What was less to be expected was that they established themselves in North Wales.

Morris began as a travelling salesman, but soon, seemingly as a result of a chance meeting with the Marquess of Anglesey,

was able to open a shop in Bangor (*Fig 1*). On his naturalisation papers in 1893, he is described as a jeweller and furniture dealer and, by 1907, he had extended the business to the more prosperous and fashionable watering-place of Llandudno. His customers

included the eccentric Lord Anglesey—not a reliable payer—and the family lawyer was David Lloyd George.

Morris was a man of great ability as well as charm and, as he spoke Russian, Polish, Yiddish, German and Welsh as well as Polish-accented English, he was able to aid the authorities in dealing with further waves of immigrants. He died at 91 after a long and full life, which he attributed to 'plenty of whisky, good cigars and no exercise'.

It was his son-in-law, Emanuel Snowman—son of just such immigrants—who, in 1911, opened a branch of Wartski in London, and it was he who made many of the acquisitions from imperial and aristocratic collections that were sold by the Soviets between 1927 and 1933, thus making the enduring reputation of the firm (*Fig 3 and Fig 6*). During the 1920s and after the Second World War, all money, old and new, royalty by families, Hollywood by the galaxy, came to Wartski to marvel and to buy. Even the 2nd Viscount Stansgate, later Tony Benn, was there; he consulted Kenneth Snowman on the disposal of his peer's coronet.



Fig 4: A cliff's disintegration is shown in Julian Perry's *Benacre Birch III*

This will make *Wartski: The First One Hundred and Fifty Years* by the present managing director, Geoffrey Munn (Antique Collectors' Club, £65), a painful pleasure for the name-dropper—not even the most practised could compete with the array so adeptly and justifiably paraded here.

Beautiful photographs of beautiful people (I am quite in love with Jessie Matthews, **Fig 2**) complement the jewels, the bibelots and, of course, the fancies of Fabergé, including a whole clutch of eggs.

Long departed from the subterranean premises in Regent Street visited by James Bond in *Octopussy*, and settled comfortably yards from Bond Street in Grafton Street, Wartski continues to attract such people, as well as putting on the most wonderful exhibitions.

Furthermore, under Kenneth Snowman and now Mr Munn, it has an important role in commissioning new work and fostering a new generation of master craftsmen. May the next 150 years



Fig 5: One of Emily Young's colossal stone heads on display in Venice



Fig 6: Russian agate Fabergé box

continue onwards and upwards!

The Venice Biennale has never before featured in one of my Art Market surveys, not only because I have never visited it, but more generally because I am not a wholehearted Contemporary and really qualified to assess video art and installations. However, among the numerous e-press releases that have come through this year, two have piqued my curiosity—is it only curiosity, interest and perhaps lechery that can be piqued?

Firstly, the contemporary department of the Fine Art Society is staging an exhibition of new work by Emily Young, whom they rightly say is 'widely acclaimed as Britain's greatest living stone sculptor', in the cloister of the Madonna dell'Orto church in Venice until November 22, to coincide with the 56th Biennale.

A few years ago, I was greatly impressed by a visit to her London studio overhung by the Westway. That has disappeared in a Crossrail development and, now, she works in the Etruscan hills using wonderful local blocks of stone for her monumental heads (**Fig 5**). Like Michelangelo's half-

formed Slaves, or Venice itself, they link human creativity to the earth from which they and we come.

More surprising to me is to hear of some good, traditional painting at the Biennale. Furthermore, it is British painting, although in the Azerbaijan Pavilion, which is actually not a marquee, but in the Palazzo Garzoni on the Grand Canal. The exhibition, made up of work by international artists in a number of media, is called 'Vita Vitale' and 'reflects on the delicate balance of our planet's ecosystem and man's destructive footprint within it'.

British artists include Julian Perry, about whom I have written before in *COUNTRY LIFE*. Recently, his theme has been coastal erosion, often showing buildings or trees as the ground crumbles beneath them. His series of large canvases at Venice captures Suffolk birches at the moment of the Benacre cliffs' disintegration, sometimes appearing to hover over the place where they had stood a moment earlier (**Fig 4**). 🐉

Next week
Napoleon as seldom seen

Picks of the week

My schoolboy efforts to learn the trumpet were painful, but I feel justified in blowing *COUNTRY LIFE*'s trumpet here: at least two items illustrated in my Blenheim Palace CADA Fair preview (*April 8*)—Delomosne's tumbler and Legge's *suzani*—sold off the page. Most exhibitors were happy and other satisfying sales included two Regency tortoiseshell tea caddies with Hampton Antiques at £6,500 and £4,000 (*above*), and a 16th-century Brussels tapestry with Joanna Booth at £14,000.

The 30th London Original Print Fair was the strongest for some years and the preview evening saw great business done. Jennings Fine Art sold the complete Ravilious 'Submarine' series at an asking price of £145,000, the Fine Art Society three more by Ravilious and Abbott and Holder its seven First World War etchings by Percy Delf Smith.



The gardening naturalists

Charles Quest-Ritson enjoys a new approach to garden history that considers the scientific preoccupations of leading early amateurs

Gardening

A Natural History of English Gardening: 1650–1800

Mark Laird

(Yale University Press, £45 *£40)

GARDEN history is usually told in terms of changing styles and fashions. In the 18th century, for example, the Baroque layouts of London and Wise gave way to William Kent, Capability Brown, William Emes and Humphry Repton. Mark Laird has a completely different approach and emphasises the introduction and study of plants by scientists, collectors, patrons and nurserymen.

For him, the principal players are John Evelyn, Mary Duchess of Beaufort, Peter Collinson, Gilbert White, Princess Augusta of Wales, the 2nd Duke of Richmond, Margaret Duchess of Portland and Mary Delany. It is around these individuals, their friends and correspondents that this book is structured. All were amateurs; most were rich.

Most of the *dramatis personae* will be known to readers of Mr Laird's earlier title *The Flowering of the Landscape Garden* (1999). This time, however, it's the natural world, both inside and beyond the garden, that intrigues these garden owners. All made substantial contributions to the development of Natural History, not confined to plants, but extending to insects, birds, mammals, shells, fossils and minerals and butterflies, as traders and colonists began to send back the fauna and flora of North America, India, the Cape and Indonesia. The learned amateurs studied them in search of system and order.

They also studied the weather, always of great interest to gardeners. Mr Laird pays attention throughout to the effect of extreme weather—the Thames freezing in the 1680s, the Great Storm of 1703, the exceptionally cold winter



Heaven scent: a 1769 watercolour by Thomas Robins the Elder

of 1739–40. Gardeners noted the effect of mild winters or summer droughts, late frosts and unexpected inundations. Evelyn, who saw divine judgement in meteorological prodigies, wrote about the consequences of the bitter winter of 1684—what survived and what he lost. Collinson and White noted that a hot summer is bad for lawns but good for wheat.

The naturalists pondered the causes and consequences of such phenomena as locusts invading London in 1748 and an earthquake shaking the city in 1750. They sought to explain the cold winter and 'red' summer of 1783, caused by the eruption of the Icelandic volcano Lakagígur. The author emphasises the importance of women in advancing scientific knowledge—horticultural science in particular. He also examines the paradox that gardeners are selective in their attitudes to Nature, welcoming birds, but not those that attack ripening fruit.

Mr Laird is a good horticulturist, with a wide knowledge of plants, both as a historian and as a gardener, unfazed by scientific studies; as suggested by the title of his book,

he's an all-round scholar of Natural History. *A Natural History of English Gardening* is not for the casual dipper-in, but a learned examination and celebration of these early students of the natural order that exists within gardens, a serious contribution to the history of parks and gardens in England.

Such is its detail that he shows how the weather affected people in different ways on a particular day. He brings together references to things that, by themselves, might pass unnoticed, but, by being experienced by several gardeners in different places, become more significant than we had supposed: 'garnishing' trees with honeysuckle, for example.

The extent of Mr Laird's research and memory for learning is remarkable. For social historians of the period, there are rich rewards in this detailed exposition. The references listed in more than 1,500 footnotes alone provide a rich mine for future writers. The book is too large and heavy to read comfortably, but the publishers have made an inspired choice of illustrations and combined them with long and helpful captions.

Memoir/literary criticism

The Nearest Thing to Life

James Wood

(Jonathan Cape, £12.99 *£10.99)

FOR MANY, fiction is a form of escapism. For the literary critic James Wood, it's the very opposite; fiction is a way of getting to the heart of existence—in fact, as the title of his new book tells us, it's *The Nearest Thing to Life*. In four extraordinary essays blending memoir and criticism, he argues that the finest fiction serves to intensify experience, creating life anew and even keeping death at bay.

This might all sound a bit lofty. You wouldn't expect less from a man dubbed 'the best literary critic of his generation', whose reviews for *The New Yorker*, *The Guardian* and *The New Republic* have shaped the literary landscape. Then again, Mr Wood is far from the owl, tweedy type who sternly dictates the rules of good taste.

The books become part of his own biography as he describes his austere, religious upbringing in Durham, his departure for America and the sense of self-imposed exile he calls 'homelooseness'. Vibrant with feeling and ripe with an enthusiasm for language, the essays teach us how to be creative readers, how to read meaning into our own lives.

We are, he explains, the 'sum of our details', and the best writing plucks out those details from the hours, days and years that make up a life, awakening us to an awareness of the present moment. Yet his praise of writers as diverse as Tolstoy and Teju Cole is pervaded by a sense of melancholy. Can the critic ever achieve the same creative autonomy as the writer? Or are they doomed to 'homelooseness', hosted by whichever book will provide a reason for writing?

Presenting complex ideas with an elegant lightness of touch, this slim, appealingly modest collection suggests otherwise. It's not simply about books worth reading. It's about a life worth living.

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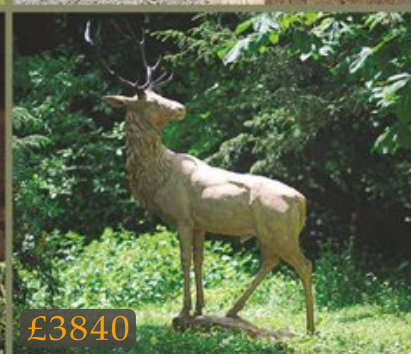
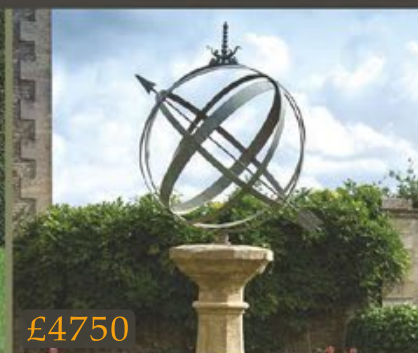
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Fiction

Continental with Juice

James Dunford Wood
(Magic Oxygen, £9.99)

THIS FUNNY little semi-slapstick novel fast-forwards the story of Ruritania, first launched in *The Prisoner of Zenda* some 120 years ago, right up to the present day. In modern times, a clique of Russian oligarchs has apparently taken charge and poured billions of dollars into the poor little country, but now there's been a revolution and a world-famous painter and tobacco addict has been elected president.

The story begins with this Churchill-like figure being driven through his new democratic domain in his predecessor's bulletproof stretch Mercedes-Benz, complete with cocktail bar, vodka icer and satellite smartphone. Wherever he goes, grey-suited functionaries fan out around him 'like a school of pilot fish'.

Sounds good—but, alas, Ruritania is in a financial and political pickle. Dodgy internet companies now rule the day and the flashing glass pyramids



Rule Ruritania: James Dunford Wood continues the tale first started by Anthony Hope in *The Prisoner of Zenda* 120 years ago

the plutocrats have installed in the capital's new business district stand eerily empty. All the new president can do is grasp at the straws.

The discovery of a bunker of old nuclear weapons that his cabinet colleagues think they can sell to the UK for a handy few million quid is followed by a much better idea. Why not boost tourism by reviving the long-extinct Ruritanian royal family? But the heir apparent, Rose Elphberg—'an ambiguous mix of innocence and mischievousness'—is not only extremely reluctant to become queen, but also just happens to be engaged

to the cocaine-addicted son of the president's arch enemy.

At this point, our real hero emerges. Disaffected telesales rep Christopher Wainwright arrives from London escorting a coachload of American tourists. Within minutes, he's fallen in love with the royal heiress and a gang of famous footballers on his bus has been mistaken for armed terrorists.

Constructed out of short, juicy, cliffhanger-rich chapters, the narrative gets increasingly tangled: more mistaken identities, kidnappings and the emergence of another potential royal heir in the shape of Englishman

Roderick Fraser. All the while, the authorities press on with plans for the royal wedding and coronation, even commissioning a new state coach and a special wedding gown for the increasingly cold-footed bride and future queen. The story ends at the start of the royal nuptials, with the world's press in full attendance.

In telling this frenzied, truly modern tale, the author lifts the lid off mad bureaucracy, invents events that one character calls 'goddamn ironical', throws in a reference to a Maitre d' 'flitting around like a demented dragonfly' and even manages to coin new slang expressions, such as 'diddlyshit'.

What is James Dunford Wood playing at? You certainly don't need to have read Anthony Hope's classic work to enjoy this crazy sequel, but I did feel a little frustrated that Continental breakfast, with or without juice, never gets served and that the much-mentioned Roderick Fraser never actually surfaces in person. Is the author keeping him up his voluminous sleeve for another book?

Andrew Barrow

Gardening

Gertrude Jekyll at Munstead Wood

Judith Tankard & Martin Wood
(Pimpernel Press, £25 *£22.50)

THE RELATIVELY recently formed Pimpernel Press is making available once again a collection of gardening classics, among which is this delicious little volume (first published in 1996) by two leading Gertrude Jekyll (right) experts. Drawing on material from varied sources, including Miss Jekyll's numerous books and her frequent contributions to the pages of *COUNTRY LIFE* in its early decades, it explores her life and work through the prism of her Surrey home. Profusely illustrated throughout, it includes dozens of photographs taken by Miss Jekyll herself, including touching subjects such as the working people of the village and, notably, her beloved tabby cats.

Hefted to her corner of west Surrey and, in particular, Munstead Wood—the house built for her by Lutyens—Miss Jekyll used her woodland and garden for continuous experiment and refinement. This book explains the processes and the very human side of a garden designer whose legacy endures.

Kathryn Bradley-Hole



Fiction

Sidney Chambers and the Forgiveness of Sins

James Runcie
(Bloomsbury Publishing, £14.99 *£12.99)

THIS IS THE fourth of Canon Sidney Chambers's tales of detecting that have been adapted to make the TV series *Grantchester*. As James Runcie is a film-maker, novelist and son of a former Archbishop of Canterbury, his background for both stories and series is impeccable. There are six tales here which, spanning two years, take Sidney Chambers from Church of England priest in his parish in Grantchester to Archdeacon of Ely.

As always, each story is full of humour. However, these short sleuths are also surprisingly dark, especially *Nothing*

to Worry About, a classic tale of wife-beating. Elizabeth disguises her bruises and burns as accidents until she ends up in hospital after a brutal assault. In *A Following*, the author charts the damage that poison-pen letters can do.

Child abuse and suicide are the subjects of *Prize Day* and *Florence* is set in the city during the disastrous floods of 1966. The author knows the location well and has caught its dour charm and great art treasures to perfection. The story is a little art lesson in itself.

Throughout all six stories, there are doubts about the Canon's marriage to Hildegard, caused by his tendency to go detecting when he should, in fact, be baby-minding. This ongoing story, at least, has a happy ending.

Leslie Geddes-Brown



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- ACROSS
7. Unpleasant bodily sensation had by seamstress... (4, 3, 7)

9. ...as is this (6)

10. Country initially unclassified partner in normal circumstances (7)

11. One who arranges mineral deposit (6)

13. Fashionably I'm old shy changeling (8)

14. Dress for set of Raj deck tennis (6, 7)

16. In an excited state for a bet (8)

18. Animal is sure tip for a short sleep (6)

20. Starting to grow but no rise (7)

21. Small journal with bag is attractive item (6)

23. Advantages of living In Edinburgh, say? (6, 8)
- DOWN
1. Hospital built on shoal by Arabic family (6)

2. Tie cluster (4)

3. Watched animal go into frame (8)

4. Money about European Community is bountiful (6)

5. Fuss when the French smell youngster (10)

6. Uses again sly recce manoeuvres (8)

8. Band leader has key to lock up drink on first evidence that tips end (4, 9)

12. Carol to study early vulcanisation when shaking violently (10)

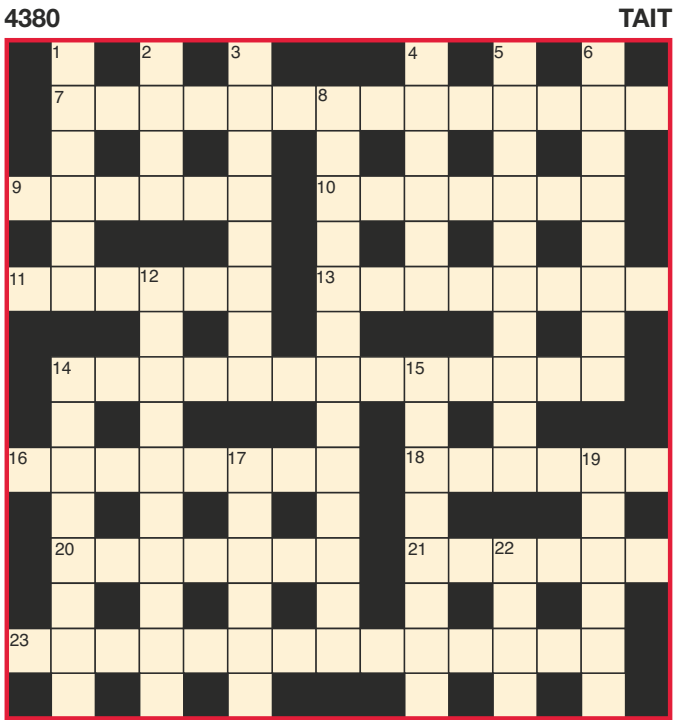
14. Those who determine how fire ends (8)

15. Leave Cuba without degree about reddish brown vegetable (8)

17. Topics delivered by the messenger (6)

19. A spirit is discriminatory by time (6)

22. Reported opening walk (4)



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SOLUTION TO 4379 (Winner will be announced in two weeks' time)
ACROSS: 1, Habit-forming; 8, Union; 9, Medicinal; 11, Thermostat; 12, Asps; 14, Resist; 15 Scenario; 17, Apple pie; 19, Edible; 22, Etch; 23, Altar cloth; 25, Neuralgia; 26 Theta; 27, Get the wind up.
DOWN: 1, Heifers; 2, Bandmaster; 3, Tamest; 4, Ordnance; 5, Mace; 6, Non-user; 7, Subterranean; 10, Lose one's head; 13, Uneducated; 16, Dialogue; 18, Picture; 20, Booze-up; 21, Safari; 24, Last.

Winner of 4377 is Rex Agustin, London SW10.

Bridge Andrew Robson

IN our series on Testing Chances in the Right Order, consider these pair of suits in which you need a third trick without losing two:

Dummy	
♠ A Q	
♥ Q 3 2	
West	East
Declarer	
♠ 3 2	
♥ A 5 4	

With a choice of Major-suit finesses, you should lead to the Queen of Hearts first. If the Queen loses to East's King, you have the Spade finesse in reserve. Conversely, if you take the Spade finesse first and the Queen loses to East's King, you are sunk, because the Heart finesse necessarily involves losing a trick (your second), even if West has the King and the finesse succeeds.

Our first deal is a Grand Slam from the Schapiro Spring Foursomes in Stratford-upon-Avon, Britain's premier annual event.

Dealer South
Both vulnerable

♠ J 6 2
♥ K J 9 5
♦ 5
♣ A 10 9 8 7

♠ Q 9 7
♥ 10 4
♦ J 10 3
♣ K Q J 6 4

♠ 10 8
♥ 7 2
♦ K 9 8 7 6 2
♣ 5 3 2

♠ A K 5 4 3
♥ A Q 8 6 3
♦ A Q 4
♣ —

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass(1)	2♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	6♥(2)	Pass
7♥(3)	End		

(1) Vulnerable, Two Clubs is too much with this aceless balanced mediocrity.
(2) Great holdings in all four suits—even the Knave of Spades in partner's first suit.
(3) If partner can bid Six, Seven must surely have a decent play.

Declarer won West's King of Clubs lead with dummy's Ace and correctly discarded a Diamond from hand. The issue was how to combine the chances of avoiding a Spade loser and the Diamond finesse. Declarer drew trumps, pleasingly two-two: now what?

Declarer cashed the Ace-King of Spades. If the Queen had dropped doubleton, he'd be home without needing the Diamond finesse (he could ruff the Queen of Diamonds). In fact, both opponents followed with small Spades. He now needed the Diamond finesse.

Declarer crossed to dummy with

a third Heart and led a Diamond to the Queen. Phew—the finesse succeeded. He could now cash the Ace of Diamonds, discarding dummy's Knave of Spades. He ruffed a third Spade with dummy's last Heart, ruffed a Club and enjoyed the two promoted long Spades. Thirteen tricks and grand slam made.

Our second deal saw West lead a Spade to the Queen and King. Plan the play.

Dealer South
Both vulnerable

♠ 7 4
♥ K 9
♦ Q J 6
♣ A J 9 8 7 2

♠ A J 8 5 2
♥ Q 8 4 3
♦ 7 4 2
♣ 6

♠ Q 9 3
♥ 10 7 6 2
♦ 10 9 3
♣ K 5 4

♠ K 10 6
♥ A J 5
♦ A K 8 5
♣ Q 10 3

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	2♣	2♠(1)
3NT	End		

(1) Bidding to the level of the fit despite the meagre point-count.

Many declarers led and passed the Queen of Clubs at trick two. East won the King, promptly returned the nine of Spades and declarer lost the next four Spades—down one.

Leading the Queen of Clubs at trick two is fine—good even, as West might cover with the King (an understandable mistake). But rise with dummy's Ace when West plays low. You have eight top tricks and, ostensibly, your second chance for a ninth is the Heart finesse. However, it costs you nothing to delay Hearts and to play out your four top Diamonds.

Diamonds split three-three. On the fourth Diamond, West throws a Heart and East a Club. You cross to the King of Hearts and find yourself at the crossroads. If you think West began with Ace-Knave-small-small-small of Spades, three small Hearts, three small Diamonds and King-small of Clubs, you need to lead a Heart to the Knave. However, might not West have covered the Queen of Clubs with King-small? And might not East have discarded a Heart from Queen-small-small-small-small?

Rejecting the Heart finesse, you exit with a Spade (key play), covering East's card. West takes his four Spade winners, but, at trick 12, must lead from Queen-small of Hearts round to your Ace-Knave. Nine tricks and game made.

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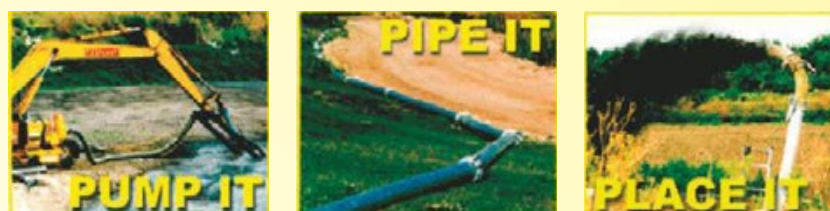


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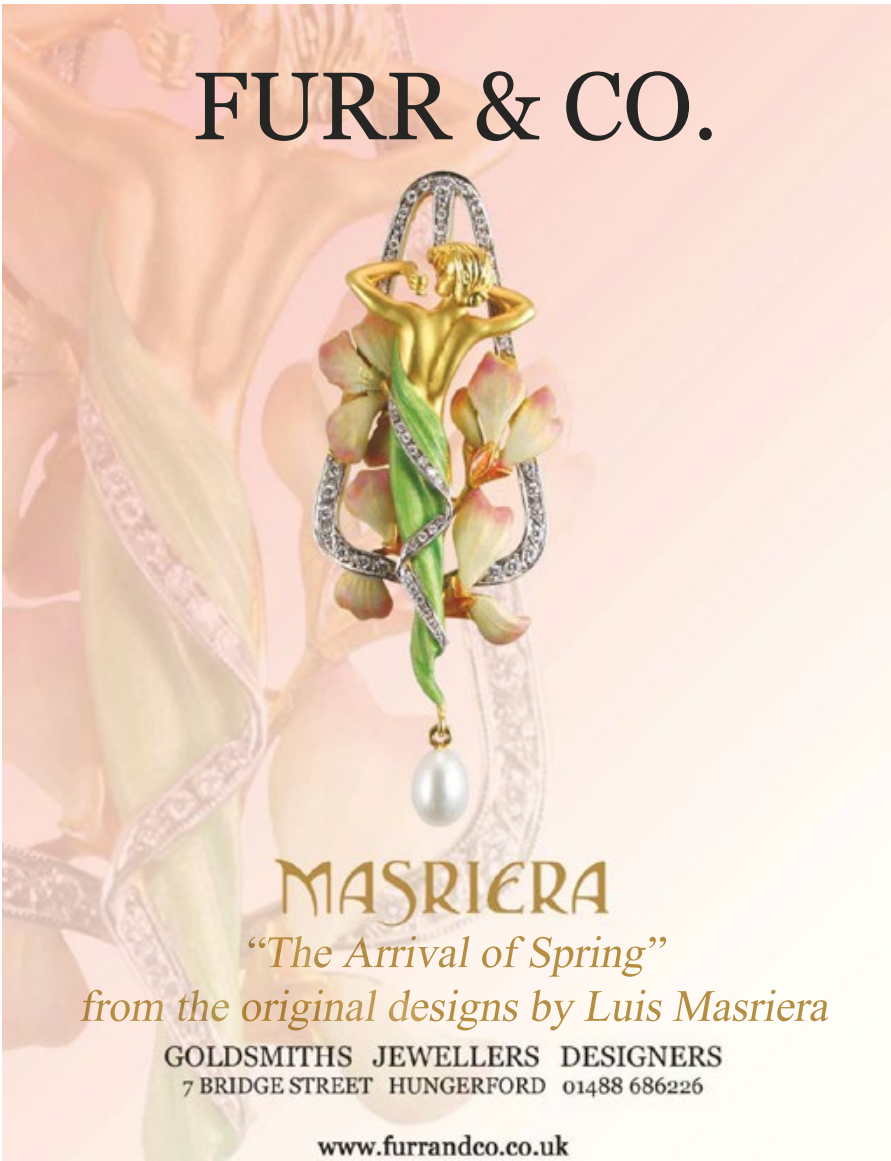


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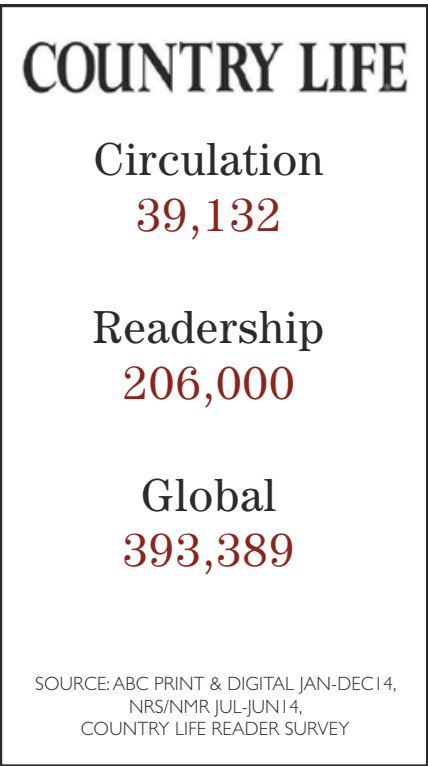
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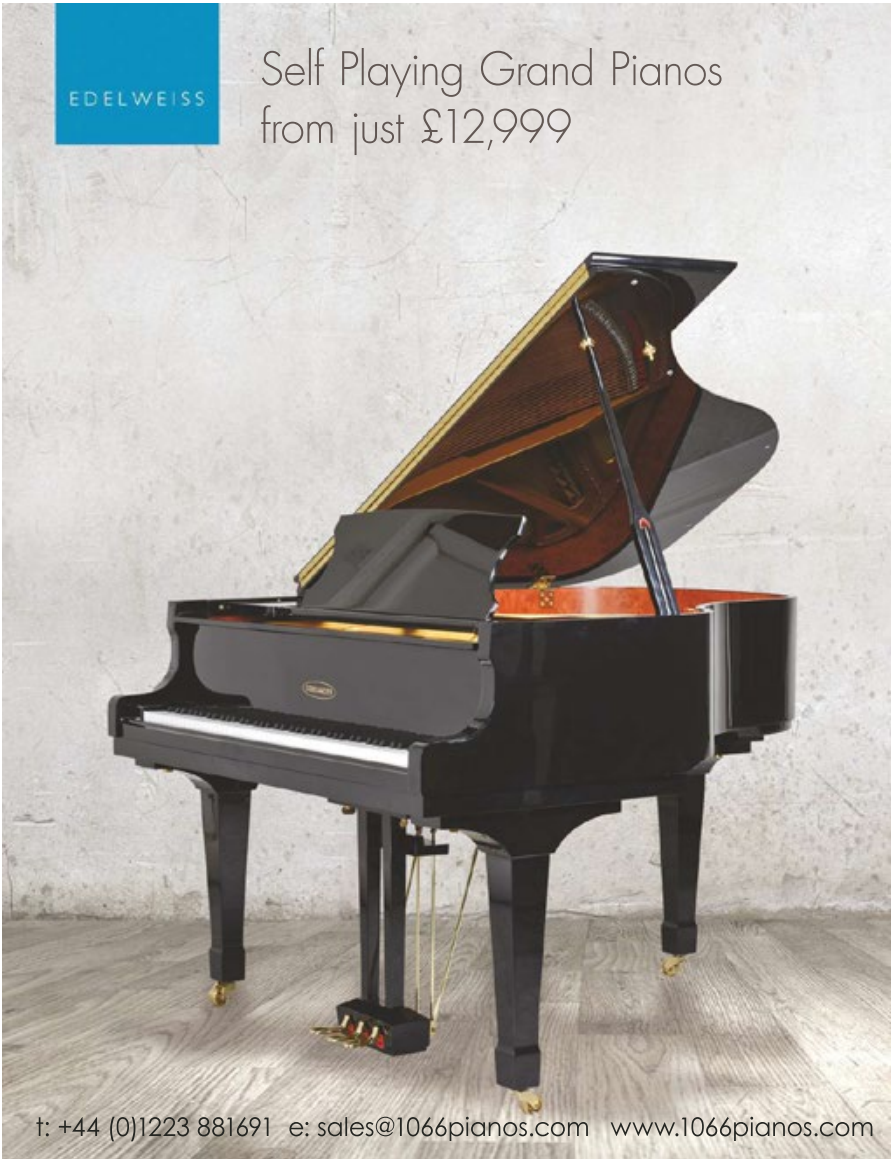
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If you go down to the woods today...

I DIDN'T think I'd ever met anyone who disliked spring, until my daughter Anna said it reminds her that summer is on the way and then it will all be over. She's not the gloomy type, but I think this is an unhealthy approach from which I need to dissuade her. Spring, I argue, is when there is so much going on. She looks at me with amused scepticism, because she knows as well as I do that, when it comes to the wonders of wildlife, I tend to miss them.

Zam, for instance, has just heard his first cuckoo. I have not. He's seen a hobby circling the tree opposite. I have not. I was woken by such frenzied birdsong yesterday that I mentioned it to a neighbour, who told me she'd seen a sparrowhawk take a baby blackbird very early that morning, which would explain the distress I was woken by. I didn't see this drama.

We went to supper with friends, partly to say goodbye to Graham, who would be retiring from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust the following day. As we sipped wine

and stared out at the water meadows, he saw an otter. As did our host. Given that Graham was responsible, more than 30 years ago, for the reintroduction of the otter to a stretch of water about a mile downstream from where we were standing, one could not have hoped for a finer, more magical farewell. My back was to the window.

Determined to overcome my lack of success when it comes to observing the natural world (it's a family joke that I never see shooting stars), I collect Alfie from school and tell him we're taking a short detour to an ancient woodland a few miles away. I've been told, by someone who knows this sort of thing, that if we want to hear nightingales sing, this is the spot. 'We won't hear nightingales and we'll get lost,' Alfie sighs as he slumps in the back seat.

An hour later, as we try another path that doesn't lead back to the car, but which has a bench exactly like the path that does ('they all have those benches,' Alf explains), my only relief is that his spirits have been entirely

restored at being proved right. He's positively jolly.

I stand still on the wrong path and try to download the nightingale song on my mobile, for

‘When it comes to the wonders of wildlife, I tend to miss them ;

identification purposes. A dog-walking couple approach—they look disapproving (why use a phone when on a lovely walk?), but when I explain the quest, they forgive me. We're a fortnight too early they explain, but we shouldn't worry about recognising the song because, once heard, it's never forgotten.

Liquid seems to be the word most commonly used to describe its beauty. I nod with understanding, because I don't want to say that my recognition of birdsong is pretty much limited to woodpigeons and everything

else sounds lovely and liquid to me.

I come home and add nightingales to the list of other non-sightings. I discover two chickens have been killed, their carcasses stripped bare, but their heads left intact. I assume this to be the work of a badger or fox, but am told that this shows the hallmarks of murder by mink. A mink has indeed been spotted in the neighbourhood. But not by me.

And then I go for a walk with a friend, who shows me a glorious carpet of primroses and cowslips on a scale I've never seen before. I ask her to identify a strange white flower I'm pleased to have spotted. She tells me it's the half-chewed remains of the common wild garlic flower—and we're surrounded by it. She crouches down and points at the emerging leaves of a stubby-looking thing.

'I've seen masses of tway-blade orchids,' I show off to Zam that evening. 'Really? Where? Can you show me?' he replies. I don't reply because, truthfully, I very much doubt it.

TOTTERING-BY-GENTLY By Annie Tempest

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